■ ENTERTAINMENT
Jed Madela brings home 6 golds from H'wood performing arts tilt
Pinoy winner in Swiss filmfest 'couldn't believe it'
■ WORLD / A10
Crashed airplane may have become flying tomb
■ ACROSS / A18
Cavite politics reaches courts as gov sues vice gov for graft

Gov't agencies adopt energy-saving measures

By Luige A. del Puerto
and Christine O. Avendaño

Asia marks end of war, but little fanfare in RP

By Marjoe C. Ortiz

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, August 15, 2005 | 36 pages | vol. 20 | no. 249

website: www.inq7.net

Teves: Deferring VAT will hurt poor

Senators blast proposal as trial balloon

By Michelle V. Ross
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo kisses newly sworn-in and appointed Armed Forces chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, during turnover rites at Camp Aguinaldo.

GMA orders AFP chief of staff: Insulate military from politics

By Christine O. Avendaño
and Dona Pazzibugan

Senga also subject of complaint

By Fe Zamora

GMA aide warns of economic meltdown

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Peso drops on oil, VAT concerns

Fresh fiscal woes halt T-bill rate slide

BUSINESS, B1

FILIPINO-AMERICAN Cristeta Comerford, the first woman executive chef at the White House, prepares a meal on the July 17, 2005, photo provided by the White House.

UP food tech grad appointed White House executive chef

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2006

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Row brewing over Dy deposition

By Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet Labog-Javellana

FORMER Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. has given a deposition in the United States on what he knows about the alleged bribery of election officials by President Macapagal-Arroyo, two opposition stalwarts virtually confirmed yesterday.

Rep. Pulgarin, consular officials in Los Angeles refused to authenticate the deposition allegedly on orders of the President, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

"I understand Governor Dy already made a deposition but it could not be authenticated because I was told – this is just raw information from the people you – that the consulary people were told not to authenticate any document that might compromise – quote unquote – administration," Pimentel said.

"The order, ostensibly from Manila, is ground," he added.

At a press conference at the House of Representatives yesterday, Minority Leader Francis Escudero said Dy told agents to take the millions (cited) if summoned by the Senate to an impeachment trial of Mr. Arroyo.

"The commitment he gave is not one, his willingness to testify once the impeachment complaint is filed with the Senate," Escudero, who met with Dy in the US last week, said.

Asked if Dy had executed a deposition which was now in the hands of the opposition, Escudero simply smiled.

On the reports dishonoring had ordered the Philippine consulates in Los Angeles and New York not to authenticate Dy's deposition, he said: "Wala na man. Obvi, (obvious). But there is a supposed order barring any authentication. One might have political ramifications without the consent of the ambassador and the concurrence of foreign affairs." The did not elaborate.

Although Escudero did not want to preempt Dy's testimony, the Sorsogon lawmaker said it was "clear that he has first-hand knowledge of the La Vista meeting, and other meetings related to election operations."

Whether Dy would make damaging claims against the President, Escudero said, "Let's put it this way. If he wanted to say those were the words coming from the mouth of Mr. Arroyo, he would say the other day last week or last month. The mere fact that he is not saying it is perhaps the best evidence that his testimony, if at all, will present allegations against President impeachment."

Escudero said the House impeachment team might ask Dy to testify in the House committee on justice's impeachment hearings if necessary.

"We can always go back and knock at his door," he said.

The amended impeachment complaint filed against President Arroyo by 44 congressmen still needs 28 signatures to minimum requirement to the Senate for trial.

Escudero says he put the number of collected signatures at 67, "and the remaining signatures could try be coming from members of either the Liberal or Nacionalista parties.

Pimentel said he had information Dy's deposition corroborated the testimony of Michael Aquino, a former Bibliotheque Nacionale who testified in the Senate that he was present at the La Vista, Quezon City, home of the President when election officials were given money, especially by Jake Pineda, the wife of suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

"What I know is that he validates the statement of Zaire and adds his own observations and other things," Pimentel said.

Told of Pimentel's statements, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion yesterday said he had "no idea" of the presidential order cited by the senator.

"I don't think it's possible," Asuncion said, when asked if the President could order diplomats abroad to deny consular services to Filipinos.

He said diplomats had no "obligation" under the Foreign Service Law and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations to convey statements when approached by client nationals for the services.

But he clarified authentications only covered the fact the statement was signed in front of the consular official and not the veracity of its contents.

"We acknowledge the statement was executed but it's not my duty to ascertain the truth," he said.

Authentications allows a document to be used in court.

Asuncion said to contact Philippine consulate officials in California for further information. He said he was not sure if the Los Angeles consulate was one of the six that stopped authenticating documents.

With Volt Contreras

WARNING

MAY PANGANIB SA ATING BANSA NGAYON.
MAY CONSPIRACY NA PABAGSAKIN SI PRESIDENT GMA AT ANG ATING DEMOKRASYA SA PAMAMAGITAN NG BALUKTOT AT DESPERADONG MGA PAMAMARAAN:
ILLEGALLY ACQUIRED AND TAMPERED TAPES, TINATAKOT O BAYARANG WITNESSES.
HAHAYAAN BA NATING MAGTAGUMPAY ITO?
ILALAGAY BA NATIN SA PANGANIB ANG ATING KINABUKASAN?

Marcos Pa Rin
Erap tunay na Pres.!
Ahat Gerapildapol
Military Junta Nyalon na!
Gloria Resign!
Joma Uwi Na!
Noli Resign!
Erap Ibalik!

KUMILOS NA NGAYON! ITAGUYOD ANG BATAS! LABANAN NATIN ANG CONSPIRACY!

Osmeña bares Garci bribe list

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CONTROVERSIAL Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano himself wrote down the amounts of money that were paid to election officials to rig the results of the 2004 elections, according to opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

Osmeña said this was contained in Garcillano's handwritten notes which Michael Aquino Zaire, former assistant of presidential political liaison officer Jose Ma. Ballesteros, submitted to the Senate committees conducting the jueteng inquiry.

Zaire has testified he was present in the La Vista residence of President Macapagal-Arroyo when election regional directors and provincial supervisors were given money by Jake Pineda, wife of suspected gambling lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

Osmeña said that during the latter part of last week's jueteng hearings, Zaire "authenticated" a document handwritten by Garcillano showing how the money was distributed among the Comelec officials. He said the two-page document was almost hidden among the documents Zaire submitted.

Zaire confirmed that Garcillano scribbled the names of Comelec officials from Bacolod, Negros Occidental, both Louies del Sur and Davao Sur, who received amounts ranging from P100,000 to P40,000, Osmeña said.

He said that according to Zaire, Garcillano made the list during a reconciliation meeting at the Grand Boulevard hotel on Jan. 30, 2006, between Garcillano and Zaire amongst the officials to dinner with Mr. Arroyo to her private residence.

Osmeña said the list revealed that so much as P650,000 in cash changed hands in just one meeting.

Copies of Zaire's list were given to Senate reporters.

Osmeña admitted that Garcillano's handwriting had yet to be authenticated.

But he said this showed that testimonial evidence about the payoffs of election officials was corroborated by documentary evidence.

"The details of the election fraud are steadily unfolding, perhaps to the dismay of the quo doctrix making vague or sotto-to-do-dos," Osmeña said.

Cam claims receiving bribe offers

By Norman Bordadora

JUSTICE rebuffed Marivic Sandoz Cam said she had no ties with three government contractors allegedly offering Cam to name her price in exchange for her silence and quiet departure from the country.

"I have them all on tape," Cam told the Senate referring to the meetings she had with the government's purported messengers.

"My lawyers (staff) are already transcribing [the details of our conversations]," she added, hinting that those who made the offer might soon find themselves listening on their respective seats on television TV.

Cam said those who met with her to lay her silence included a former congressman named Sumuroy, a former governor and an incumbent government official. She said their identities would be revealed at the proper time and proper venue.

But, however, said that she still didn't know what legal action her lawyer Frank Chavez was planning against those who had tried to bribe her.

"The last meeting was with the former governor. I think that was on Friday," Cam said.

"The group the former governor represented claims to be non-partisan. But I don't know what their real intentions are [if the group was not involved in politics in anyway]," she added.

Cam said all three meetings transpired last week.

Dengue crisis far from over, says DOH

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE DENGUE crisis is far from over.

The deadly mosquito-borne disease has killed 484 of the 16,142 people infected from Jan. 1 to Aug. 13 this year, the Department of Health said yesterday.

The entire country has been placed under a dengue alert after more than 500 barangays were found to have "clusters" of three or more cases each in the last four weeks. Dr. Eric Tayag, DOH National Epidemiology Center chief, said.

The number of infections nationwide marked a 23 percent increase over the 13,120 cases recorded in the same period last year, Tayag said.

At the present rate, Tayag said the number of infections would likely breach the 20,000 cases health officials expect by the end of the rainy season two months from now.

"The rainy season is not over yet," Tayag said at a press conference. "We are anticipating that the rains of the previous two weeks will increase the number of cases in the next two to four weeks."

"Kulex pungpi," the mosquito that carries the dengue virus, usually breeds during the wet season between June and October. Cot-bound volunteers is in chief breeding ground.

Despite the rising number of cases, Tayag said this would not be considered a national epidemic. An area is said to be experiencing an epidemic only when the number of cases breaches the ceiling set using data from the last five years, he said.

Metro Manila, for example, had an epidemic in "threshold" of 2,141 cases the week 31 as the period from July 31 to Aug. 6. From the area registered only 1,99 cases, an outbreak was not declared, Tayag said.

Local epidemics, however, were declared in Bambanga City General Trias in Metro Iloilo and Dipo San Roque in Barangay Ibig Ave., Quezon City. The infections in these areas are under control, according to the DOH.

In Manila, infected areas were: 1 Moreno Street, Vitas and Tondo in Tondo, Alonso Street, Ramon Cabrera, and Quirinada Street in Sta. Cruz, Sampaloc Street in Brgy. Vitas, Tatalon, Calumpit, Pasong Tamo and Tagaz Dagupan were also infected in Malabon.

In Quezon City, 10 barangays were infected: Sto. Cristo in Bulacan, Kamagayan and Bandarang Bonito in Payatas, Bistek Ignacio, Kaunlaran in Bonanza Hills, Batasan Road at UP Diliman, BMPC-Bonanza in Bonanza, Bulacan at West Avenue, Bandila Bello in Greenfield, and UP Employees Village in Diliman.

The other provinces and cities that showed clusters were Pampanga, Zambales, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bataan, Aurora, Bulacan, Cebu City, Davao City, Mandaue City, Toledo City, Bohol, Cotabato, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro, Ormoc City, Coronado City and North Cotabato.

China: 'Please keep *endless* politics out of NorthRail'

Let us not mislead the Filipino people

IN RECENT WEEKS, Senate President Franklin Drilon has been weaving a web of fiction to poison the minds of the Filipino people against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. His fantastic claim: NorthRail's 32.2-km. project from Caloocan to Malolos is the most expensive rail project in the Philippines. He does not say it is a double-track, double line railway equivalent to 62.4 kilometers, the first in the Philippines.

In the interest of the truth, the North Luzon Railways Corp. (NorthRail) presents the true state of the project—separating fact from Sen. Drilon's politically-laced fiction.

Sen. Drilon's fiction: *The project is overpriced at P893 million per kilometer of track.*

Fact: The project cost is P560 million per kilometer of a two-track (double-line track) system—*not a single line two-double railway*—built over the old Philippine National Railways tracks, which will be completely replaced.

The TOTALLY NEW railway system includes the construction of six stations, a depot and maintenance yard, construction links, 21 Diesel Multiple Units (84 train cars), signaling system, grade separation at road crossings, retaining walls, eight major bridges, a viaduct section, and cost of additional rights of way. *Sen. Drilon's fiction omits these vital pieces of information.*

Fact: Compared with the actual costs of the country's recent rail works, NorthRail is shown to be the cheapest per kilometer of rail.

In Metro Manila, MRT-3's 11.8 kilometers cost $20.9 million per track-kilometer; LRT-1's 10.2 track-kilometers, $31.79 million; and LRT-2's 26-track-kilometer extension would cost more at $15.08 million per track-kilometer. NorthRail's 64.4 track-kilometers to-add cost to only $6.54 million per kilometer, much cheaper.

Fact: This is a Bilateral Agreement between China and the Philippines, where the Chinese Government designated a 100 percent state-owned company to be the Prime Contractor for the project. The Prime Contractor is ratified No. 17 by the **Global Engineering News Record**—the 225 Largest International Contractors.

Fact: When completed, NorthRail from Caloocan to Malolos would be the cheapest mass transport system in the country.

The basic fare would be P10 plus P1 for every kilometer thereafter—a total of P41 from end to end for the full 17-minute ride (inclusive of three 1-minute stations). The current bus fare is P51 for an hour's ride.

'I don't want to get into your endless political debates'

Fact: The project is being financed and built by the Chinese Government, with no Filipino connection. Through the China Export-Import Bank, the Chinese Government extended a concessional credit facility of US$400 million (*not* US$500 million) at only 3 percent interest (*not* 7 percent) over 20 years (*not* ten years).

The Chinese Government describes this assistance as a "special loan for an important ally." China is known worldwide for its modern, efficient—and the world's cheapest—rail system serving the bulk of its 1.1 billion people.

Fact: China's credit facility covers 85 percent (not the standard 40 percent) of NorthRail's project cost. The Philippine Government would pick up the remaining five percent as counterpart fund (US$15 million).

So exasperated was Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines, H. E. Wu Hongbo, by the political chaos and deception being peddled by the opposition that he chastised them for dragging NorthRail and China needlessly into the political potboiler. He said: "This will not serve the best interest of the Filipino people. I don't want to get into your endless political debates . . . What I am wary of is that the endless debates on this contract may send a negative message to other Chinese investors and foreign investors as a whole."

He emphasized that the contract is "above-board—we have nothing to hide."

Sen. Drilon's overworked fiction branded the Chinese loan as onerous. This fictional tale—so poorly plotted—crumbles just as easily in the face of facts that can stand the toughest scrutiny. In fact the Chinese Embassy attaché, Peng Xiaolei, described China's loan to the Philippines as a "preferential loan to an important ally." The figures prove this: 3 percent interest—the lowest rate—stretched over 20 years. *China's standard rate for loan is 7 percent over ten years.* Sen. Drilon's fictional tale ignores this core value.

NorthRail endorsed at the highest levels of the Governments of China and the Philippines

China's two Presidents, two Prime Ministers, two Speakers of Parliament, and two Ambassadors of the People's Republic of China endorsed the project—China's first major stake-taking of its kind in Southeast Asia.

On the Philippine Government side, those who approved and endorsed it were: Secretary Romulo Neri, then National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) director general; the NEDA Investment Coordinating Committee (ICC) headed by the Secretary of Finance, Foreign Secretary Delia Albert, and then Finance Secretary Jose Camacho and his successor, Jeanette Antonino, and the NEDA Board chaired by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

China and the Philippines signed last April—during Chinese President Hu Jintao's state visit to the Philippines—the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Section 2 from Malolos to Clark in Pampanga. Then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima signed for the Philippines and Yang Zilin, governor of the Export-Import Bank of China, signed for the People's Republic of China. Those who witnessed were: Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and Transportation and Communications Secretary Larry Mendoza.

Yang Zilin, 56[?], governor of the Export-Import Bank of China, and then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, 69[?], sign the Memorandum of Understanding between China and the Philippines for Section 2 of the NorthRail Project. Chinese President Hu Jintao and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo witness the signing in Manila last April.

So encompassing are the project's potential benefits that political leaders of the provinces through which the line will pass have all expressed their appreciation of the railway modernization program—more than 50 years after the PNR tracks north of Manila were abandoned.

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the governors, city mayors and municipal mayors of the Central Luzon provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac and the Northern Luzon provinces of Pangasinan and La Union have hailed the project's vast potential to create thousands of rural jobs, and raise rural incomes to generate collateral industries in their localities.

What the Project offers is a fast, reliable and cheap transport service that will bring about development, create jobs and decongest Metro Manila—both in population and in vehicular traffic.

People are tired of negative politics

For your information, President Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker Jose de Venecia, NorthRail under its president Jose L. Cortes Jr., the Philippine National Railways under its general manager Jose Ma. I. Sarmiento II, the Department of Transportation and Communications under Secretary Larry Mendoza and Undersecretary Gene Alamonte-bay, and Representatives Augusto H. Baculio (chairman, *Committee on Railways and Rio-Rio Systems*), Monico Puentevella (chairman, *Committee on Transportation*), Rolando Andaya Jr. (chairman, *Appropriations Committee*), Edwin Uy (chairman, Committee on Ways Committee), Talib Alidor Jr. (chairman, *Committee on Blind Growth Areas*), Arthur Defensor, Ferjenel Biron, Jaimee Gaite, Raul Gonzalez Jr., Judy Syquia, Jose Solis, Luis Villafuerte and Wilfredo M. Sy-Alvarado are actively working to seek approval on the Manila-Calamba line with the Korean Government, the Calamba line to Albay and Sorsogon with the Governments of China and Poland, the Visayas-Panay railway from Iloilo City to Roxas City and the Mindanao railway from Iligan City to Cagayan de Oro City with the Austrian and German Governments and the Arab-led OPEC Special Fund.

We ask Sen. Drilon: Keep negative politics and cheap fictional tales out of NorthRail. These days, our people have become extremely wary of too many tall political tales.

Let us not endanger relations with China, and let us give the Filipino people the modern, cheap, safe, and ultimately efficient mass transport system they deserve!

THE NORTH LUZON RAILWAYS CORPORATION

Erap plunder raps 'hard to believe'– Reuter

By Helen P. Flores

CAPTION: media report Fr. James Reuter SJ yesterday said the plunder charges against former President Joseph Estrada were "hard to believe."

Reuter made the comment outside the courtroom following his testimony at the Sandiganbayan on the possession by the poor of the Iconic President.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said the proceedings showed Estrada's lawyers had abandoned his legal defense and were now relying on the testimonies of prominent people like Reuter, he said the head political opposition was irrelevant to the charges against Estrada.

Reuter said the court hour at one time the former President was in tears after a government announcement he could get the same amount every month to help maintain the Our Lady of Peace Hospital in Pandacan. Quezon City. He added that President Macapagal-Arroyo also maintained the house Estrada pledge.

Reuter said that when Erap gained an appointment in Paco, Manila, he insisted that Estrada's daughter, not his own mother, to accompanied the family.

Reuter, 69, also told the court he knew the former President had sought his help in arranging a meeting with the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, after Estrada had been ousted from power, in a bid to avert bloodshed.

He said Sin, a fierce critic of Estrada, refused to meet with the deposed President but told Reuter that he [Sin] had already forgiven Estrada for whatever wrong he may have committed.

Estrada was ousted in 2001 and has been charged with plunder and perjury in the Sandiganbayan. He has been in detention since 2001.

"It is hard to believe the charges against a person with such a human quality and love for the poor," said Reuter, whom previous in the courtroom brought smiles and laughter as the witness cited Estrada's generosities.

An American, Reuter has lived in the Philippines for 67 years and was made an honorary Filipino citizen by the Senate in 1996. He heads the National Office of the Mass Media of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Aside from his involvement in Catholic media, he is known for his outspoken views.

Estrada counsel former Senator Jose Sqeia said the defense presented Reuter to show the good qualities of the former President and to counter the trial by publicity against him.

Corrections

IN THE AUG. 12 issue, a front-page story—"Chinatown can eventually relax *drugs*"—referred to the name of the embassy's concept developer. The correct name of the architect-concept developer is Dr. Felino—and Emilio—Pho Bell. Lucero.

* * *

IN THE AUG. 14 issue, an obituary on Page A6—"Fr. Gaisko, Bibb. (Bishop), 62"—misstated the name of Diamantino Gaisko. Diamantino is correct—not Gaisko.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, August 15, 2000
[20th Week in Ordinary Time]

1st Reading: Ezk 9: 1-7; 2d
Gospel: Matthew 8: 23-27

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I say to you, you will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, believe me, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich one to find it rich to enter the kingdom of heaven."

On hearing this, the disciples were astonished and said, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus looked steadily at them and answered, "This human is for impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Then Peter spoke up and said, "You see we have given up everything to follow you. what will be for us?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, who have followed me. When in my world—in the Day of Pentecost, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in glory, you, too, will sit on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. As for those who have left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property for my Name's sake, they will receive a hundredfold and in place eternal life. Many who are now first will be last, and many who are now last will be first."

Commentary:

Jesus seeks to lead His disciples the hard way of the Kingdom. how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom. Hard as a camel, an agent down, pulled through the eye of a needle. It is impossible for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus exhorts his disciples to be content with the middle class, and the poor alike to give what is their excess, and to reach out their hand to those who stand in need—the poor of the earth. He assures them that they will be rewarded for poverty in the end of time when there will be judgment. If they share in his way of the cross then they will share in his glory and even in this life they will know the protection of God in every moment, in every circumstance, in every place, friends who are rich friends of God, the presence of support and life everlasting. How little we believe in the goodness of our God and what he hopes for us—even now, even here!

Christian Publications, Inc., 4 Liberty St., 10th fl., Diliman, Q.C., Philippines, Tel. 920-2950, Fax 920-2951, general editor: Rev. Fr. Jesus Arellano, SJ, Associate editor: Rev. Fr. Clemente Bautista Jr., SJ, Asst. Editor: Rev. Fr. Gerardo Acosta, SJ, Circulation Manager: Ms. Clemencia Ocampo, Publication Manager: Ms. Ma. Teresa Ocampo, Publication Assistant: Ms. Ma. Teresa Ocampo, Publication Assistant: Ms. Ma. Teresa Ocampo, Publication Assistant

Pampanga bishop on Pinedas: I don't see them anymore

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—Pampanga archbishop Pedro Arigos said he would not turn away suspected "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Kuya" Pineda and his wife Lilia "Baby" Pineda if they asked him for counsel and advice.

"The House of God welcomes [everyone, even] people outside the flock," the 66-year-old archbishop told the reporters before he opened here on Sunday a pictorials and photo exhibit for Late Pope John Paul II.

The Catholic Church, he said, "does not discriminate."

Pilarca informed that the Pinedas were hurting because church leaders in the province did not come to their defense, the archbishop said: "We're not even aware of that because we cannot read people's minds."

"I don't see them anymore," he said of the couple whom he earlier described as "good parishioners" and "very generous" in terms of donations to the church.

But while Arigos was willing to give the Pinedas moral guidance, he reiterated his strong opposition to jueteng operations and its planned legalization.

In Pampanga, which Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. refers to as the "Mecca of jueteng," more than 100 priests have preached against the evil[illegible] of gambling and have distributed primers against jueteng.

The primers carry Arigos's appeal to jueteng operators, politicians and police officials to stop the illegal numbers game.

The practice of some priests to solicit jueteng money for charity projects or for the construction of churches has stopped since last year, according to Arigos.

"We stand by that," said the archbishop who has shepherded the Archdiocese of San Fernando and its suffragan dioceses of Tarlac and Iba[illegible] in the last 16 years.

Arigos did not say what advice he would give to the Pinedas but in his speech during the exhibit opening he said it was best to seek guidance from the teachings of Pope John Paul II—their torch, in the end, would help end divisiveness and confusion.

The Pinedas, who dropped out of the public eye since May, have become even more inaccessible after former Malacañang operative Michaelangelo Zaire surfaced early this month with his testimony.

Zaire told the Senate inquiry that Bong Bong[illegible] the supposed special spectators of their[illegible], former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, in Mindanao to rig President Macapagal-Arroyo's[illegible] the May 10, 2004 elections.

Zaire, a relative of the opposition, also claimed it was Baby, a Pampanga provincial board member, who handed out bribe money to various regional election officials after a meeting in Ilo Arroyo's home in La Vista, Quezon City, in January 2004.

Baby, through her lawyer, denied the allegations, while her husband, a native of Lubao, homeowner of Mr Arroyo, had not issued any statement.

The President said no such incident took place in her La Vista home.

SPORTS

Compiled by L. Pangilinan

Email us at sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor: Tokkie S. Melendrez

TENNIS: Women's Pan-Am Championships, 7:30 a.m. (1-1 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.) and 11 p.m. (SBS) Sports TV — The first round continues from Cincinnati.

BILLIARDS: Rudy Go Jr. Cup 9-ball tournament, 12:15 p.m. (Gimpo Billiards Cafe) at Mall Square.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Ateneo's Fonacier de Leon tries to get up a shot off Jose Rizal U's Armando Montoya (center) and Jimmy Ryan Sena.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Cardinals doom Lions with gripping escape

By Jasmine W. Paya

WHEN their offense failed, the Mapua veterans turned to their defense in the final stretch.

Rooting up Jose Rizal's gunners on the last play, the Cardinals narrowly edged the Lions, 69-66, yesterday in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Ganza Auditorium.

"I gave credit to the boys for making the last great defensive stop of the game," said coach Elmer Yee. "We missed our shots but the boys didn't give up and played tough defense."

Jeferson Gonzales, veteran split free throws gave the Cardinals a 66-57 lead with a minute and 16 seconds left. Inquirer Profile, 22 Calendar).

The Cardinals strengthened their hold on third spot at 7-4, behind only semifinalists Letran Knights and defending champion Philippine Christian University Dolphins.

The Lions, bidding to boost their Final Four hopes under new coach Boy Bansil, slipped to a 3-8 record.

And their cause looked doomed as star Jon Sebastian Rago moved three points ahead at 63-60 after tipping the Jose Rizal U Bombers, 65-60.

The Stags had no trouble maintaining control with pro-bound Jaypee Rapsing and Paul Pontejos combining for 29 points.

"Rapsing wanted to show that he's worth it," said coach Boy Sablaya over the 2003 Most Valuable Player who scored 14 points and 6 rebounds. Read Full Report on the Pilot Boxing Lead last Sunday.

The Bombers fizzled out of contention at 2-9.

Jeferson Gonzales ended a jumper to pull the Lions within a point, 64-63, but the Cardinals forced an error. Opie Mateo and Marvin Ildefonso then converted on the ensuing turnover.

The Cardinals broke a 40-40 deadlock before the jump center up with 27-3 run to pull within 48-42.

In junior play, Eric Salamat shot 20 points to lead the Mapua Jr. Cardinals past the Jose Rizal Jr. Bombers, 80-66, for a league-best 11-1 record.

THE LINEUPS

Jose Rizal

MAPUA — Gonzales 22, Ildefonso 12, Mateo 11, Ilagan 10, Ilao, Salazar 5, Dela Cruz 4, Mabasa 2, Ramos 1, Arambulo, Pascual, Lumbangui, Galvez, Blanco

Jose Rizal — Montoya 17, Castellanos, Aglipay, Cruz, Santos 8, Nuñez 4, Mesa 3, Angeles 1, Salazar 2, Ramos, Tagaan 6, Fernando 5, Arenas 2.

Quarters: 15-12, 34-25, 48-40, 66-60, 69-66

Second Game

MAPUA — Ocampo 22, Aquino 14, Salamanca 12, Lacanilao, Aquino, Ramos 4, Mejia 3, Aquino 2, Bernardo, Ramos 6.

JRU — Hidalgo 23, Deladem 15, Nuñez 8, Sia 5, Angeles, Sangalang 2, Sanchez, Magbanua 6, Aquino.

Quarters: 23-12, 34-28, 60-48, 80-66

PAN-PAC TILT

RP batters clinch 3rd over Aussies

TEAM Philippines outlasted Australia, 7-5, yesterday to salvage third place in the fifth Pan Pacific Junior Baseball Championship at the Rizal Baseball grounds in Montalban City.

The Filipinos stayed with the runner squad three days humbled by the diminutives, 9-5, and gained a berth in the South Asia Championship slated in October behind Australia, Japan and Singapore.

The Japanese, featuring players from All-Nippon Champion Yokohama, capped their domination of the four-nation event by knocking the Filipinos twice, 13-0 in the title game.

Only the top-six venues actually qualified to the South Asia tournament set up Singapore. As host, however, Singapore was an automatic qualifier, and the No. 2 slot went to the Philippines.

The Filipinos opened up with a three-run burst in the first inning and the dreams could manage just one

THE PHILIPPINES' Jhon Llagono beats the throw to Australian third baseman Mitchell Thompson in the fourth inning.

run in the second inning off Victoria Vega, the youngest member of the team at 12, who allowed two hits and struck out seven less innings.

Rudy Garcia de Mallari of Ateneo limited four batters in a superb relief pitcher the last two innings.

Leading RP's offensive was catcher Luke Bonacolta, who belted two triples and four runs batted in.

"Our batting and pitching worked," said coach Ian Ordonez, who also steered the RP team to a second place finish behind Chinese Taipei in last month's Asia Pacific Series in Seoul, South Korea.

Mayor Mario Acuzar Fernando graced the closing ceremonies along with tournament director Rafael Domingo, who represented the organizing Baseb Baseball Federation (Philippines) Inc. Eduardo Kelly, and Philippine Tee Baseball Foundation head Rodolfo "Boy" Ongpin Jr.

The event was sponsored by the Philippine Amusement Gaming Corp., and supported by Subaru Cebu Pacific Air, Gilligan's Sports Bar, Barrenty Alcohol, Elia's Restaurant, Jollibee, Golden Star Laboratories and Tropical Hut.

The Filipino domination of the South side after absorbing a 6-4 defeat in the Second Japanese on Sunday.

MEET YOUR MATCH

SURESTEP

The No-Holes Boards

10134 EDSA, VETERAN'S VILLAGE, PASAY, QUEZON CITY

TEL: 416-0061 to 63 • 372-3848

LSGH, Ateneo keep top spots

LA SALLE Greenhills and defending champion Ateneo crushed their respective rivals Sunday to show the way to the Fireworks competition of the 39th MILO Basketball Invitational Philippines Thousand tournament at the Araneta gym.

LSGH took command early behind a 16-4 burst and then repeatedly turned back San Beda College's rallies to win, 64-56, and remain on top of Group A after 5-0.

Ateneo overwhelmed Don Bosco Makati, 89-34, to stand Group A also at 5-0.

In other Fireworks games, University of Santo Tomas topped San Beda-Alabang, 71-53; Ateneo School downed St. Anthony, 62-54; and De La Salle-Zobel ousted Holy Soul Institute of Switzerland in an exhibition, 71-35.

Yon Soliz whipped SMPIA, 71-47, in their sixth win in Group A of the SBP division, while the La Sallians whipped Lourdes School (QC), 46-35, also by the six-win margin.

FEI-Cavite cagers overpower MLQU

ELE Energy Insurance-Cavite routed Manuel L. Quezon University, 87-69, to nail its sixth win in seven in La salle 9th Disney Express Cup basketball tournament at the Wellington gym in Makati (QU).

Jimmy Bulos Rodriguez paced the Insurance Boys with Myra Ephela Molina and strong support Leo Jerome Ryong" Hidalgo with 13 points.

In the other game, Philippines leveled its record at 1-1 by beating Hampton Hotel, 100-94.

Bonzo Dan and Jimboy Rebillon combined for 34 of Mallorca's score to fall off the win streak the Pamplona again 6-0 on PBA-like fashion.

'Grand re-launch' slated in all SEA Games venues

By Mars Jacinto Reyes

THE INQUIRER Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee will soon stage a "grand re-launching" to spark a public lifeline in the three months left before the opening of the Nov. 27-Dec. 5 biennial event.

Senators in the Philippine and the 2005 SEAG, which has been launched at least three times the past four years, will again be showcased to the public starting in the third week of August in Metro Manila, Bacolod City, Cebu City, and Subic.

This time, a road show presentation will be held in each of the cities to create as much public awareness as possible and to compensate for the lack of decorations by the events under the previous Philippine administration setup.

Senators and those still idle for consolidation of duties among officials after Philippine Olympic Organizational was crippled of its key powers and was relegated to the sidelines in favor of Philip-

GREAT DEALS OF QUALITY

AUTOWIDE

TRUCKS, PASSENGER VANS & SUVs

BIG PRICE CUT

AUGUST 10 TO 25, 2005

Sale Starts 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Malaysia deploys fresh peace troops, extends mission

MALAYSIA has extended its peace monitoring mission in Mindanao, deploying seven days a fresh batch of troops to monitor a truce between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The 12 Malaysians were welcomed by the outgoing commander of the Malaysian contingent, Brig. Gen. Zulkifli bin Mohd Zin, Rene Servianda, chief peace process adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo and Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafols, chair of the government's ceasefire committee.

More Malaysians are due to arrive in the next days to complete the existing batch of 60 members deployed in areas in Mindanao controlled by the MILF.

The mission was supposed to end in October, but the MILF and Manila asked Malaysia to extend its presence to ensure that the truce is holding, Zulkifli said.

Servianda said the Philippines was hopeful of signing a peace agreement with the MILF either at the end of the year or early next year.

The next round of talks are scheduled to resume in Malaysia in the final quarter of the year.

"We are looking forward to the signing of the peace agreement at the end of the year or the first quarter of 2006. The arrival of a new batch of IMT (International Monitoring Team) sends a very strong signal that the Malaysian government has much trust in the ongoing peace process," Servianda told reporters.

Zulkifli said the truce was "holding very well," noting that there has been a "substantive reduction" of skirmishes between both sides since the Malaysian monitors arrived in October last year.

"I don't feel the cooperation and constant need of both parties on the ceasefire has risen to a higher level of confidence and trust and peace-keeping," he said. "I am very hopeful that things will further improve."

Servianda noted that before the IMT's arrival last year, about 500 skirmishes between the military and the MILF had been recorded.

Another 56 incidents were recorded in the first few months after the arrival of the monitors, but they were found not to have been violations of the ceasefire terms of reference but "miscommunications and misunderstandings" between government and MILF troops, Servianda added.

No incidents of violations have been reported for the last 120 days, he said.

The 12,000-strong MILF has been waging a separatist rebellion since 1978. It signed a truce with Manila in 2001 and subsequently denounced links with foreign militants, including the Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been linked to the terrorist al-Qaida organization.

Elias ceremonially divided reports that 3 militants were training in MILF camps in Mindanao.

Last week, the government said it was hunting 20 Indonesian militants believed to be planning suicide bombings in the country. AFP with Philip Obaso

PCGG to sell Imelda's diamonds

By Ninotchka Rosca

[illegible] had been zealously diversified as cognates, over education. After nearly two decades, the government is finally shaking free.

By year's end, the Presidential Commission on Good Government hopes to finally auction off pieces of jewelry seized by Gimmee-First Lady Imelda Marcos.

PCGG spokesperson Mick Soares said the agency expected to recover around $40 million from the sale.

The jewelry now being held in vaults in a Central Bank vault, has been independently appraised and found to be genuine.

The PCGG is finalizing the conditions and details of the auction, including the venue and date of the auction, Soares said.

"It is all being discussed at high levels. We hope to have the pieces disposed of before the year ends," he said.

Sotheby's auction house

There were no details on what sort of jewelry would be auctioned off but a 2002 report by the Inquirer said the collection consisted of 89 pieces whose duty were incorporated when [illegible] auction house Sotheby's in 1995.

At that time, the minimum estimated value of the jewelry pieces was placed by Sotheby's at between a low of $4,194,000 and a high of $5,756,000.

The report had described the jewelry pieces as "works of art" by fashionable designer of their exquisite designs, breathtaking size and the superb quality of the gems.

Bracelet worth $1.3M

It said the collection included a yellow gold 35.71-carat diamond-studded bracelet with a central marquise-cut diamond outlined by [illegible] gold. When appraised by Sotheby's in 1995, it was reportedly valued conservatively at from $900,000 to $1.3 million.

According to the report, the collection included jewelry pieces seized in 1986 from Imelda's personal dressing room [illegible], supposedly a store bound of Marcos. Businessmen denied they were owned by Marcos and claimed the pieces were made of paste.

Soares said at least two have been identified and their owners, whose [illegible] identity had no personal interest in selling off the jewelry.

Who are the bidders?

A source in the PCGG said that the agency was determined to know the backgrounds of bidders to prevent the jewelry from falling back into the hands of Marcos.

Now in her early 70s, Marcos faces several graft cases before local courts. The cases are linked to her roles as housing minister and governor of Metro Manila.

The 15-year-old PCGG has recovered Marcos-linked assets in the Philippines amounting to P50 billion and $682 million from Swiss bank accounts.

Teves: Deferring VAT will hurt poor

From page A1

to lift the freeze order on the VAT law, which will raise prices by sending exemptions for several items, including electricity and fuel, and other business tax goods.

Instead [that is], the high court's dismissal information offers, said there was no legal impediment for the government to defer the implementation of the VAT law should the court uphold its constitutionality.

"That's a matter for Congress and the implementing arm [of the government] to consider," Khan said.

Devil and deep blue sea

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Mr. Arroyo could not unilaterally defer the implementation of the VAT law passed by Congress.

Drilon said a joint resolution from both houses is necessary.

He said Mr. Arroyo was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

If she defers the VAT law implementation, the government's financial crisis will worsen and the economy will probably slowdown because the country's rating and impose higher interest rates on the country's ballooning debts.

However, to effect immediate implementation will mean gas prices going up to probably P40 per liter and the effect on basic commodities will really hit the common people," Drilon said.

Trial balloon

Drilon and other senators disclaimed the proposal to defer the the VAT law's implementation as a "trial balloon," saying it was a ploy to save Mr Arroyo's neck now that she is facing impeachment.

"It sheep shot. Unsubstantiated. That is what Malacañang is now, to survive the political crisis even its public and Congress to be damned," maverick administration Sen. Joker Arroyo said.

Senator Arroyo's position was shared by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and opposition Sen. Serge Osmeña.

Senator Arroyo said that after "the in-house fiasco" Drilon declared he had advised the President not to freeze the VAT law because the Supreme Court lifts the temporary restraining order. Malacañang on one said it was studying the matter.

"Hypocrisy, plain and simple," Senator Arroyo said. "It's unethical and a fraud after the Supreme Court had issued the TRO the government started to mull over this childish matter quietly side by side with the impeachment problem because while the government public could be indifferent to the impeachment, the national public will be outraged if prices keep going up."

Hypocrisy

He said Malacañang's hypocrisy was there for all to see. "First the price of oil could shoot up beyond $70 per barrel now already hovered in and anticipated during the three months' PSF computations at hearings and debates. Then Malacañang shows it knew this."

He said Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet, including members of the so-called "Wyatt 15" who resigned and called for the President's resignation, had argued then that the budget deficit had to be plugged even if the public for damned.

"Now Malacañang will turn full circle, saying the sudden Europeans rebu subvention] questionable for the VAT to the congressional committee alone as the adamant ing board to use the monies. Moral of the story: All moneys are to satisfy the public, not the people, really," the senator said.

He said that no one who had consistently and strenuously opposed the VAT, he should have been happy with Malacañang's move because "I should be studious ed, but it is different with us, because it would amount to doing the right thing for the wrong reason."

Sen. Aniel Victor Enrile Jr. reminded Salceda that his proposal to defer the VAT was still implementation of the 12 tax centive to the agency.

"You can't defer a law. The law says it's going to be effective on a given day. Just enact the President to sign the suspension of the law. You can't suspend it. A law is a law," Enrile told reporters.

Wishy-washy

Daniata said Malacañang's plan to put off the implementation of the tax law was incorrect and wrong.

He noted that the opposition had filed a petition in the high court questioning the constitutionality of the VAT, and that the power given to the President to increase tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

"So this is wrong. She's saying she can postpone implementation of a law passed by Congress. She cannot do that," Daniata said.

"They argue forward and turn steps backward. An omnivore knows by a dead bird leadership," Magsaysay said.

"If we turn wishy-washy, we may suffer a credit downgrade and get hit by high interest rates," he said.

Expect a disaster

In the House of Representatives, Rep. Jesli Lapus said the "severe way to destabilize this country is not to solve the fiscal crisis."

Lapus, chair of the House ways and means committee, said he could not imagine what would happen to the economy should the President heed Salceda's advice.

"It will be chaotic. It will be on pencil a disaster. Heaven knows what will happen to us," he said.

Outside Congress, a consumer advocate has asked the government to only chop a 2- to 3-percentage VAT rate hike.

Food Enterprises said it would be better to reduce the VAT rate on food instead of deferring its implementation, which might lead to "loopholes" that could cause the government more problems.

"If prices stabilize at present levels, we are looking at P2.50 to P3 a liter increase for gasoline and about 50 centavos a liter more for diesel," he said. "It does not seem that prices are ready to cool off. I foresee strong global demand for both products come September." With reports from Armand V. Nocum, Richard Lim Uba and Abigail L. Ho

> *'If we can't drill for oil, we can grow it from soil'*

WELL THEN, Philippines soon be "growing" its own gasoline?

The people's "last iron hope" for cheaper fuel could come from the same crop that nourishes their teeth and enlivens their parties—sugarcane—fluid.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said yesterday.

Zubiri, the advocate of alternative fuels, said ethanol gas, which is sourced from sugarcane, would cost only P22 a liter compared to almost P34 per liter for gasoline.

"Sugarcane will not only put sugar in our coffee, or rum in our glasses, but also fuel in our cars," Zubiri said in a statement.

"If we can't drill for oil, we can grow it from soil soil."

Legislation to set aside 300,000 hectares of land planted to sugar in the country, now languishing in Congress, would encourage investors to build ethanol fuel plants in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon, Zubiri said.

He said oil major oil players in the country had pledged to market the "sibuyas" (onion tears) would produce, while importing the ethanol they could blend itself goodbye.

He added the government has planned that by 2004, 10 percent of the country's gasoline requirement would be supplied by ethanol, which is made by fermenting and distilling crops with a high sugar content, such as sugarcane.

Zubiri said a national alcohol action fuel program being implemented not by the government and the private sector has the to target substituting 10 percent of national gasoline use with ethanol in the years.

Considering that 300,000 hectares of land planted to sugar in the country can produce 3 billion liters of ethanol per year.

"That's enough to meet only 10 liters pumped into cars would come from sugarcane. ... The country's energy savings would be around P10 billion a year."

Philip C. Tubeza

Gov't agencies . . .

From page A1

national staff. Deputy Director General Avelino Razon says he plans his men out of 6 p.m. to two hours before offices actually close.

Blame the galloping price of crude oil in the world market for the change, at least unilaterally in the latitude of some officials.

But last Friday, President Maria Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, speaking on national television on Sunday night, called for a change in the lifestyles of Filipinos. If they want to help the country survive the onslaught of oil crisis, she said.

Joining Ms Arroyo's appeal, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla called on the nation not to allow a situation where the government would have to reduce gasoline subsidies for the public.

The message has been heard at Camp Crame.

Soon enough, one might even see top officials of the Philippine National Police going on foot patrol instead of riding in air-conditioned vehicles.

Or the police may turn to bike patrols instead of car patrols, saving not only on fuel but also banning smog-causing vehicles.

Easing the impact

They're simply doing their bit for energy conservation, and it's good for the future, says Razon told the Inquirer yesterday.

Ms Arroyo and her advisers on the national development of the country's energy situation when they announced measures intended to ease its impact.

The price of crude oil shot to a record $87.10 a barrel last weekend. The figure dipped Monday but kept within striking distance of $85.

Traders said the underlying reason remained bullish and expected the market to rebound shortly as global demand for oil was still robust.

Ms Arroyo said the government would raise the load to conserving energy and to coming up with programs with the help of businesses and the private sector.

Fluorescent lamps

On Saturday she signed an executive order instructing all government agencies to switch to fluorescent lamps and other devices that conserve and cut consumption by 10 percent.

With transportation accounting for more than half of the oil being used in the country, Ms Arroyo wanted to work with the private sector in coming up with an effective "fuss-friendly system" and a program to coordinate vehicles.

"We are asking the public to cooperate in the proper use of oil and electricity because there are pricing repercussions," she said.

"Everyone should think twice about our lifestyle and adjust the way we consume oil and electricity," the President said. "Opting to use less electricity, using more transport and the proper use of appliances are among the measures that every Filipino can undertake."

Ms Arroyo also said that would create prices had increased by 62.3 percent since December last year, but the country's domestic crude prices rose only by 14 percent as the same period.

Rolling storm

She urged the industry to start conserving energy now when demand of prices were not at the same levels globally.

Lotilla cited how measures the country could take to cope with the crisis include:

- Double prices of commodities.
- Create job opportunities.
- Implement a program on energy efficiency and conservation.

Trade Secretary Jose Sarila said that by this week, the Department of Agriculture would increase the number of rolling stores selling affordable goods to the public.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Philippine Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry also pledged to help conserve energy by making use of Businessmen Image in front of them.

Out with draperies

Besides, said the DTI's four offices would start dismantling their internal walls of artificial light by minimizing the use of heavy draperies.

For job creation, Lotilla said the release of 10 million from the road users' tax for rebuilding roads and bridges can be accelerated.

Ms Arroyo said she had instructed the Department of Science and Technology to look for other technologies, like the "gasification" being used in the United Kingdom.

The government also asks the private sector to reduce its use of power by changing work hours and improving the efficiency of business operations. Supermarkets and gas stations will be asked to limit their operating hours.

"This will be voluntary and to avoid rotations," Ms Arroyo said.

The National Power Corp. said that starting Sept. 1, it would make sure only power plants not using oil would be used to avoid brownouts.

4-day workweek

At the Senate, staff members and employees have discovered the subtleties of a four-day week orchestrated by Senate President Drilon.

They simply work 10 hours a day. Monday to Thursday instead of the usual eight hours, with Friday off.

Sure, the estimated 3,000 employees and legislative staff work 10 hours a day — from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday — but they get to rest every Friday and save on gas.

"It's much better than our old schedule because I get to use the next day. We usually finish at four hours and on Thursday nights," said Glenda Ofal, media relations officer of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Ofal drives a car from her home in Sta. Mesa, Metro Manila, to work. She shells out P300 a day for gas.

Big savings

"Usually in one week we are using one fifth of the cost of power and water. So that's one month of savings in one year," Senate Secretary Oscar Yabes said.

Boss, on Friday, the 13 government vehicles used to ferry Senate staff to official functions are sidelined, and only the essential offices — such as the police office are open, according to Biazon.

The existing motion to adjust office hours staff and employees to carry-off light and air-conditioning units from noon to 1 p.m., except in the senate, new offices and the session hall.

Things may change

The chamber is likely to keep the schedule unless there is an important announcement by Ms Arroyo, Yabes said.

"If the impeachment is resumed not here, then we might have to work more days, not just four days," he said. With a report from TJ Burgonio

UP food tech grad appointed . . .

From page A1

flash asked Sabelo "to pick up his knives and leave." What followed was a lengthy selection process as the Miss Lady interviewed prospective cooks.

In recent months, the First Lady had been asking applicants to prepare test meals at special luncheons and private meals at home. She and US President George W. Bush are currently on vacation at their ranch near Crawford, Texas.

As a leisure quantity, Gutierrez had a certain advantage over outside applicants.

"It's something Mrs. Bush had a comfort level with," said Irene Whitson, the First Lady's press secretary. "She knew what she was capable of and it was an opportunity to promote someone from within."

Female chefs pleased

Other female chefs were pleased with Gutierrez's appointment.

"I think it's incredible that they hired a woman," said Ann Astrid Reich, one of the first women to build a chef level position in the White House, as an assistant to the former pastry chef Roland Mesnier. "I also think it's very good policy to bring people up within the ranks. I call it paying your dues."

Wesley Clark and Associates, a crisis-management firm founded by retired four-star general, may soon to take credit for Comelibrib's election. The organization sent a letter to Linda Bird to Mrs. asking her to consider the position for the job because the appointment would be a role model for women.

"Throughout our history women have been at the helm of feeding their families. The organization said in the letter. "Now is the time to have a woman at the helm of feeding America's first family."

But, according to the White House, none of the people suggested by the organization were interviewed in the selection process — "100,000 to $100,000 a year with no overtime... it will below what top-level chefs can earn on the outside.

Grueling job

While being executive chef at the White House has its share of prestige, the job also can be grueling. The head chef is responsible for designing and executing menus for state dinners, social events, holiday functions, receptions and official luncheons hosted by the US president and first lady for as many as 3,000 guests per year.

The Bushes are not known for the frequency of their official functions. There were only four during the first seven from 1993-2000 and only one so far in the second year of the Bush presidency.

But Laura Bush has signaled her intent to do more entertaining than during her husband's first term when the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks curtailed White House functions. Bush started his second four-year term at the White House in January.

Comelibrib prepared the menu for the White House dinner in honor of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in May.

She also developed the menu for last month's honorary dinner for Indian Prime Minister Shatrughan Singh. The 130 dinner guests dined on grilled asparagus soup with lemon cream; pan seared halibut; ginger-carrot butter; basmati rice with pine olive nuts and currants and broiled summer vegetables; and salad of Bibb lettuce and citrus vinaigrette.

Favorites

Comelibrib had been a favorite with Chris Nash, chef at the Watergate Hotel, where she was executive chef in the hotel's home room of Deans.

One top Washington chef, Eric Ziebold, had been approached, according to media reports. But the Times quoted him as saying that the White House job was "not a good career move."

Richard Hamilton, another reported candidate, said that who, over was chosen "may not be the best chef they can possibly find," but "the one who achieves they are most comfortable."

Hillary Clinton also cleaned out the White House kitchen when President Bill Clinton took over. French executive chef, Pierre Charpilloz, quit.

Schuli, a California native and graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, was hired in April 1994 because Hillary Clinton wanted to increase the number of American chefs in the White House kitchen.

Aquino's *Feb 42 AFP Raiders and Sino York Times/News Service*

DepEd teachers, workers to undergo random drug tests

By Alcuin Papa

SOME 500,000 employees of the Department of Education (DepEd) – including 460,000 teachers – will be subjected to random drug tests starting this year.

According to Dr. Thelma Jacinto, chief of the DepEd Health and Nutrition Division, former DepEd secretary Florencio Abad had ordered the drug testing but this was not implemented because the agency was busy preparing for the opening of classes this year.

He said that drug testing is in compliance with Republic Act 9165 or Dangerous Drugs Act, which ordered the tests done on all government employees.

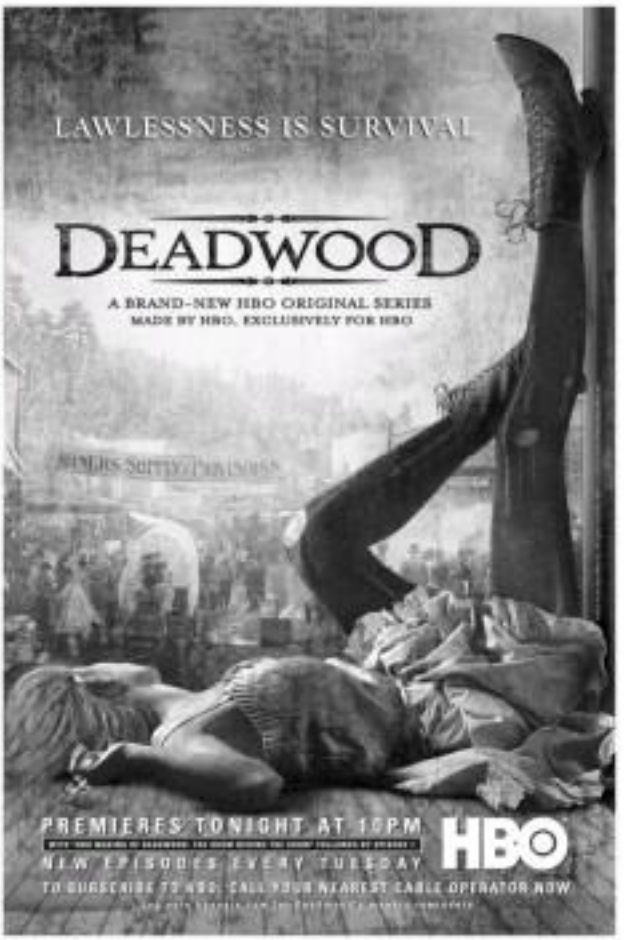
The tests will cost the department P80 million, Jacinto said. "The non-teaching personnel will be first to undergo the random drug testing and the teachers will follow," she said.

She said the department is still drawing up the guidelines for the tests. Officials of the DepEd are set to coordinate with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Authority (PDEA) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for the tests.

The DepEd-National Employees Union (NEU) is supporting the drug tests. DepEd-NEU president Dominga Alidon, who is helping draft the testing guidelines, said this would help counter the inaccuracy of drug tests.

"This random drug test among employees also aims to enhance the quality of public service. We will never know if we might have already been infiltrated by drug users bringing in illegal substances inside the agency. But this must not be used by anyone for any criminal prosecution," said Alidon.

The DepEd has around 500,000 employees, around 460,000 of them are public school teachers while the rest are part of the department's non-teaching personnel.



New name.
Same people.
Same quality.
Same service.*

Isla Lipana & Co.

Formerly Joaquin Cunanan & Co.

A member firm of

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

© 2005 Isla Lipana & Co., a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. All rights reserved. "PricewaterhouseCoopers" refers to Isla Lipana & Co., a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (a Philippine partnership) or, as the context requires, other member firms of PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited, each of which is a separate and independent legal entity. "connectedthinking is a trademark of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The WORLD

Crashed plane may have already been flying tomb

ATHENS—A Cypriot airliner that crashed in Greece may already have been a flying tomb when it plunged to earth with some of the 121 people aboard already either dead or unconscious, early indications suggest.

Manila yesterday said no Filipinos were among the dead.

Sunday's crash, the worst on aviation in Greece and the worst involving a Cyprus airline, perplexed aviation experts astounded by what appeared to have been a catastrophic failure of cabin pressure and or oxygen supply at 33,000 feet—nearly 10 km up, higher than Mount Everest.

There was also mystery over the last minutes of the Helios Airlines Boeing 737 flight which was declared "emergency" when it entered Greek airspace and failed to make radio contact, causing two F-16 warplanes to be scrambled to investigate.

All 115 passengers and six crew died, most burned beyond visual recognition, when the plane, with no one at the controls, spiralled down in a death dive into a mountainside and ploughed into a field.

The plane was on a flight from Larnaca in Cyprus to Prague with a stop in Athens. An official spokesperson said Greek authorities denied some media reports that many of those on board were children.

Airport officials in Cyprus and flight PIC5322 left Larnaca at 9 a.m. on Sunday and lost contact at 10:30 a.m.

Greek Defense Ministry officials said 39 minutes elapsed between the pilot first being raised at 10:30 a.m. and the plane crashing at 11:03 p.m.

Greek government spokesperson Theodore Roussopoulos said the F-16 pilots sent to investigate reported that while the pilots out of action there may have been a last-gasp effort by others on the plane to bring it back under control.

"The situation was characterized unusual, meaning the aircraft was not under the control of the pilots," Roussopoulos told reporters, explaining how the crisis unfolded after the plane failed to make radio contact.

"At a later stage, the F-16 saw two individuals in the cockpit seemingly trying to regain control of the airplane," Roussopoulos said.

"The F-16 also saw oxygen masks drawn when they got close to the aircraft. The aircraft was making course in some right-hand turns to show it had lost radio contact."

A passenger on the doomed plane said in an SMS text to his cousin in Athens: "The pilot has turned blue. Cousin farewell, we're finishing."

The plane broke apart when it crashed, with the two engines 500 m away from each other, the cockpit other than 200 m away and the tail broken off a further distance away.

Greece's Defense Ministry said it suspected the plane's oxygen supply or pressurization system may have malfunctioned.

Lots of cabin pressure was identified as the probable cause of two similar but unrelated crashes in Australia in recent years. Reuters, Associated Press

GREEKS search through the debris of the crashed Cyprus passenger plane, Aug. 14. —AFP

RMIT University STUDY IN AUSTRALIA

RMIT UNIVERSITY FREE INTERVIEW SESSIONS

Fuel has become airlines' greatest cost

By Daphne Benoit

PARIS—With the inexorable rise of oil prices, aviation fuel has overtaken personnel as the greatest operating cost to airlines.

This time was Brent back into the spotlight last week after the price of oil hit a new high of more than $30 a barrel on Friday in New York, compared with $15 at the end of March.

Tracking the change in the price of crude, aviation fuel reached $ 4.000 cents/liter on Tuesday in Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

"Previously, airlines are not built to deal with $60-oil," said Remy Batches, an analyst at Morgan Stanley.

The surge in prices has meant airlines have had to adapt to a rapidly changing cost environment.

"Given the extremely competitive environment in the airline industry, a rise in the price of fuel forces airlines to choose between a cash and a hard place: to push the cost onto passengers with the risk of losing market share, or reduce their operating margins," explained Olivier Beck, an expert at the French oil institute, IFP.

Based on an average price of $27 per barrel—far below last week's levels—the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has forecast that fuel costs will rise to $42 billion in 2001, from $61 billion in 2000.

Experts believe oil prices will stay at high levels, meaning the increase in fuel costs could choke off a recovery in a sector that has only recently emerged from three years of turmoil following the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

On Friday, deals of Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific airline, David Turnbull, said that the issue of fuel costs was "the biggest single problem" faced by the industry.

"The chances of our fuel bill falling is very small," he told reporters. "It is comes down, that's good for the airline, but that wouldn't usually happen because demand is falling, so that will mean we will lose on the revenue side."

Cathay Pacific said its fuel costs for the first half of 2001 had nearly doubled to $654 million from $492 million a year ago.

Most airlines, with the exception of low-cost carriers such as Ryanair, have introduced fuel surcharges to pass on the extra costs to their customers.

Air France, the Japan Airlines, has added $40 to the price of an intercontinental flight. The increase has worried the price-sensitive(?) of passengers.

So far so good, according to flight-wise airlines reported an 8.9 percent increase in international traffic in the first six months of 2001, owing to strong demand in business and first class tickets.

But the fuel surcharge comes only a part of the increase in costs, forcing airlines to implement fuel-saving measures.

Fuel consumption has become an even more important consideration when renewing fleets, providing an incentive to aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing to produce more efficient models.

The new Boeing 787, which promises to be 20 percent more fuel efficient than a similarly sized equivalent, has been well-received by the market.

Boeing had counter-sums in mind, as chairty association IATA but began a campaign to shorten long fuel routes around the world and improve loading systems at airports to reduce unnecessary time spent on the air.

They hope to lower the industry's fuel bill by $750 million for this year.

These efforts will have some impact, but some believe the main consequence of the price increases might be to prompt a wave of mergers in the industry.

"It will be interesting to see if the commodity phenomenon finally triggers the consolidation we need in the industry," said Boeing.

"It would be a good consequence. It should have happened five years ago after Sept. 11." AFP

Shakey's GIRLS VOLLEYBALL INVITATIONAL LEAGUE

SHAKEY's GIRLS VOLLEYBALL INVITATIONAL LEAGUE formally opened last Sunday at the UST Gym drawing fourteen (14) Metro Manila High Schools. The League's defending Champion is Colegio San Agustin.

Seen in pictures are: Ms. Meggie Jose, Shakey's Marketing Manager and Mr. Vic Gregorio, General Manager of Shakey's welcoming all the participants. Mr. Gregorio said, "We will continue to support women's Volleyball to assist in the sport's development and hopefully mold these players into future National Team players".

Quoted in a read message from Philippine Volleyball Federation President, Roger Banzuela said, "in behalf of the PVF, we thank Shakey's for their support of Volleyball and congratulate the organizers for the successful staging of the Girls Volleyball Invitational League".

Last year's 3rd Runner-Up, Hope Christian School, beat a reinforced Diliman Prep Team in the opening day match 25-21, 25-17 followed by Phil. Institute of QC winning 25-23, 25-21 over Imus Institute.

UST's Paguinto, Lucindo, Lopez and Patrongon prevailed over E. Rondon's gallant efforts of Pepito and Untalan to post a 25-19, 19-25 and 25-17 win in the only 3-set match.

Sunday games, August 21st, 9:00am at the UST GYM: UP Integrated School vs. University of the East; Phil. Institute of QC vs. De La Salle Lipa; Colegio San Agustin vs. Imus Institute; St. Francis Baccior vs. Dilliman Prep and ICA-Greenhills vs. University of Santo Tomas.

sponsored by: Shakey's

supporting sponsors:

Nonconventional oil a reality due to improved technology

By Amelie Mercenaire

PARIS.—The economic viability of heavy oil, sometimes called 'unconventional oil,' had long been considered doubtful, but is now a reality owing to improved technologies that put Canada and Venezuela in the spotlight.

Two years ago, Canada edged in between Saudi Arabia and Iraq as holder of the second largest reserves of oil according to the influential Oil and Gas Journal.

Proven reserves were estimated at around 180 billion barrels, but 95 percent of that are currently found in the western province of Alberta.

Until recently, bituminous substances such as shale oil and tarsands were not included in classifications such as that established by the journal, owing to major difficulties in exploiting the resources.

Accounting methods remain a controversial issue—tables that set aside but the amounts are nonetheless there—to the gigantic.

At almost four trillion barrels, of which 600 billion are considered potentially exploitable, some international oil represents a supplemental resource almost equal to the current reserves of conventional oil in the Middle East, according to the French Oil Institute.

"Extraction in some zones has already begun and is economically viable with a barrel at $25," the institute said. Last week oil prices hit new highs of $27 in New York and more than $30 in London.

"Stimulation of heavy oil is without doubt one of the technological paths that must be mastered as quickly as possible," noted Francis Perrin, editor in chief of the trade magazine Le pétrole et le gaz arabes (Arab Oil and Gas).

"The main interest is there are resources that have already been discovered," he said in explanation rife. We have eliminated them and they are absolutely gigantic," he said.

Because alternative systems such as the amount of water needed for or quantities of carbon dioxide released in the extraction process, but technologists have subsumed a lot of that.

Once treated, nonconventional oil can be used to produce synthetic oil, which can then be refined, and used in place of conventional oil.

As a result, the sector is booming, and two major operations were announced this month.

The US pipeline operator Kinder Morgan has acquired the Canadian group Trans for about $5.4 billion.

Morgan said on Aug. 1 that Alberta oil-based reserves owned by Texaco mine "expected to become an increasingly important supply source to North America and Asia."

The French group Total announced it would pay $1.11 billion for the Canadian Deer Creek Energy, which owns massive reserves near Athabasca, in the same western province.

Oil majors such as ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips and Total are also working on heavy oil reserves in the Orinoque region of Venezuela, where reserves are estimated at between 100-270 billion barrels.

The situation appears to be a bit more delicate than in Canada however.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is insisting on presence on foreign oil companies to sign contracts that provide more royalties and tax revenue for his country. AFP

US Navy proposing high-tech, $3.3-B destroyer

WASHINGTON—The US Navy, seeking a greater role as America's military wages wars far inland, is pushing an expensive, experimental destroyer it says will be able to bomb targets well away from shore.

The Navy is trying to improve its ability to conduct "fire support"—using heavy guns to assist Marines or soldiers ashore, much like land-based artillery does. The frequency of such naval fire support missions declined during conflicts of the last half-century, and the Navy has turned to expensive cruise missiles instead of guns to hit targets farther inland.

The proposed destroyer, called the DD(X), would fill a gap opened with the removal from service of the last battleships more than a decade ago. Navy officials contend that the DD(X) has no rivals, who say the Navy is betting on technologies that aren't fully developed and argue the ship is too expensive.

The first DD(X) is projected to cost $3.3 billion, but many ships would be chosen, the Navy says. Since 2004, however, the Navy's estimated costs per ship have gone up almost 63 percent for ships built after the first of their class, the Congressional Research Service says.

One proposal before Congress would cap the price per ship at $1.7 billion, forcing the Navy to redesign the DD(X) to something smaller and probably less capable.

The Navy also has reduced the number it wants to buy, from between 7[illegible] to 24 down to between eight and 12, prompting fears that the military won't grow shipyards enough work and force cuts to those, the congressional researchers reported recently.

One group wants to see the Tarawa Class 5-ton battleships [illegible] from and [illegible] Wisconsin make a comeback, arguing their ability to bombard targets inland with their massive 16-inch guns is unmatched in the fleet. The vessels are inactive but could be returned to service with sufficient investment.

But Navy officials say they don't want the battleships removed to active duty and there are no proposals in Congress to turn them into museums.

Current cruisers and destroyers mount only 5-inch guns with a range of about 23 miles. The guns of the Iowa and Wisconsin can hit targets 39 miles distant with unguided shells carrying 1,900 pounds of high explosives.

The Navy says the guns of the DD(X) will far exceed the capabilities of those on the battleships and the current fleet.

The ship would carry two 155-mm guns that fire rocket-propelled rounds. Current versions of the gun have hit targets 60 miles away. The Navy hopes to reach 96 miles. Navy officials also talk about an electromagnetic rail gun, possibly available by 2020, that can hit targets 100 miles away.

Where the battleships fire unguided shells and destroyer targets through manned firepower, rounds from the guns of the DD(X) will be guided by satellite positioning data, like many modern aircraft bombs and missiles, and be far more precise.

The first DD(X) isn't expected to join the fleet until 2013 or so, pursuing it continues to receive funding. The Navy also is working on a rocket-propelled shell for its current warships, but that is unlikely to be ready until 2010.

The Navy makes other big promises regarding the DD(X): It will be stealthy and so difficult to detect as an attack submarine; it will have a radar able to pick out targets from along extended coastlines; it will be heavily automated and need only a small crew.

The ship will also serve to host one helicopter, unpiloted drones, small craft to fight off attacks by small boats, and surface to surface and surface to air missiles.

Many of those who are pushing the various of the battleships as an alternative to DD(X) are members of the United States Naval Fire Support Association, a group of retired military and security officials, who say the mission of battleships exposes ground troops to significant risks.

"The highly effective and versatile battleships are an incredible bargain and should be reutilized for rapid reactivation, instead of being turned into museums," William L. Stoutsman, a Navy veteran and the group's executive director, wrote in an e-mail. "Our constantly dwindling fleet could use their massive inhalers of firepower and their automatic presence, as effective as an invasion, to[illegible] visible show of force where we want to get people's attention and respect."

But Rear Adm. Mark J. Edwards, the Navy's surface warfare chief, says the Navy doesn't want the battleships back for several reasons, most notably the 1,500 to 1,500 crew who are required to operate such one. Plans for the DD(X) call for a crew of 150 or fewer, making the ship far less expensive to operate.

Navy officials also prefer the precision and range of the new destroyer's guns over the raw destructive power of the battleship's. AP

ACTEL Communication Trading
P8,500
PANASONIC
P15,300
COMPLETED 1 YEAR IN ADVANCE
TOUCH Z TOWER II
FEW UNITS LEFT
P22,815
813-2222
243-6560
VIPER
"So easy access, sweet! our gate is remote controlled. You won't get wet opening your gate!"
For Free Installation Call:
886-6696, 788-0221
Heavy-Duty Cleaning?
LEAVE IT TO THE PRO!
SPEECHPOWER
Our Top Graduates Become Speech Readers & Call Center Trainers
Come and Observe
Classes begin TODAY
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY COURSES
www.speechpower.ph
STOP BAD BREATH NOW!
SIWATA ALMOST 25 YEARS IN THE MARKET NOW
YOUR DAILY DOSE OF
BALANCED NEWS AND FEARLESS VIEWS...
DELIVERED STRAIGHT TO YOUR DOORSTEP!
528-0183 • 528-0186
897-8808 loc. 0267
or mail / fax coupon below

Israel begins Gaza pullout despite settler defiance

NEVE DEKALIM SETTLEMENT, Gaza Strip—Israel began its historic operation Monday to pull out of the Gaza Strip after 38 years of occupation, meeting anger and defiance from settlers being uprooted from their homes.

Thousands of Israeli police and soldiers moved into Gaza to tell Jewish settlers they had 48 hours to leave or be forcibly evicted after two Israeli cabinet ministers were declared illegal as the stroke of midnight.

"This is breaking our hearts but it is vital for the future of the democratic state of Israel," Israeli Infrastructure Minister Avigdor Yitzhaki said.

Soldiers and soldiers began going door to door in the settlements on the Muslim-ruled coast to deliver eviction notices but had to swiftly abandon the operation in the largest community after residents blocked the entrance.

But as defiant settlers angrily denounced their former cheerleader Ariel Sharon, Mofaz made clear that Israel intended to keep hold of large West Bank settlements close to its pre-peace deal with the Palestinians.

Around seven hours before it can't begin hauling out the evacuees, the main Kissufim junction into Gaza was closed to the settlers for the last time.

"From this moment on, all settlers and stay in Gaza is prohibited for Israelis by law," Army spokesperson Brig. Sharon Hasgold said.

Furious settlers promptly attacked car windows, set fire to tires at the Neve Dekalim settlement and tried to slash the tires of a military vehicle in protest.

Efforts by officials from the main settlers' lobby Yesha to calm down the crowds fell on deaf ears and journalists were assaulted by hate youths.

"This is not what we planned but we cannot control these young people," one of the main leaders of Yesha, Shaul Goldstein, told AFP.

"The activity underscores our struggle," added resident who is the mayor of the Gush Katzion regional council in the occupied West Bank.

Although there was no resistance to violence in the morning, the premiere of around 1,000 settlers massed around the entrance of Neve Dekalim led police to abandon their plans to deliver the eviction letters.

"If they don't let us inside, we are not going to leave our way in," police spokesperson Supt. Eli Levy told AFP.

"We are not going to enter the settlement. They have two days to evacuate of their free own will but at midnight on Monday it's the end," he added.

Police operations marks the first time Israel has withdrawn from Palestinian land occupied in the 1967 Arab Israeli war.

Mofaz said the pullout was an extremely painful process but reiterated a year vital that Israel passed in parliament by respected. "The state has decided and now it is the time to carry out that decision," he said.

Army chief-of-staff Lieut. Gen. Dan Halutz is a final briefing at his top brass Sunday that only 26 percent of settlers would leave their homes by Wednesday and acknowledged that the tasks of the Gush Katif settlers had been hastened by up to 5,000 right-wing activists.

His assessment was endorsed by senior leaders who predicted that a majority of the 8,000 Gaza settlers would stay until the bitter end.

There were no signs of settlers leaving Gaza through Kissufim early Monday, according to an AFP correspondent at the checkpoint.

Meir Dekten, a longtime Neve Dekalim resident, said he wanted to leave but the Army had so far failed to provide him with removal containers as promised.

"I just want to get out and abide by the law," said the bank manager.

But settler leadership has urged supporters not to use violence against the Army, renewing much of their venom for Sharon who was for years seen as their ultimate champion in government.

The prime minister, who is due to address the nation in the evening, believes his plan will enable Israel to retain control of West Bank settlement blocs where the vast majority of the 241,000 settlers.

Mofaz implied on six areas that would remain under Israeli control in any peace deal with the Palestinians.

"The settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Jordan valley will remain under Israeli control," he told Army radio.

Sharon was hosting a Cabinet meeting at which ministers were to give their final seal of approval to the evacuation of specific settlements.

The government has so far only formally approved the evacuation of three isolated settlements. AFP

ISRAELI girl cries as she holds on to the front gate of the southern Gaza settlement of Neve Dekalim Aug. 15. More than 50,000 Israeli soldiers and policemen took part in uprooting 8,000 settlers and their supporters from the Gaza Strip. AFP

Indonesia, rebels sign Aceh peace deal

HELSINKI—The Indonesian government and rebels from Aceh signed a truce on Monday aimed at ending nearly three decades of fighting in the province devastated by last December's tsunami.

The deal, signed in Helsinki by Indonesian Justice Minister Hamid Awaluddin and Malik Mahmood of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), provides for an amnesty and disarming of the rebels and restricts government troop movements in Aceh.

Disarmament begins on Sept. 11 and will be monitored by officials and soldiers from the European Union and Asia.

Finnish mediator Martti Ahtisaari hailed it as the "beginning of a new era for Aceh," where people had a chance to "live their lives in a peaceful, just and democratic society."

The Indian Ocean disaster, which left an estimated 170,000 Sumatrans dead or missing, prompted both sides to which to [illegible] GAM dropping its historical demand for independence and Jakarta agreeing to let the rebels carry local politics.

"In Aceh, we feel that this new [Indonesian] government is sincere to its desire for peace, whatever the modalities," GAM negotiator Mohammad Nur Djuli told Reuters before the ceremony.

Successful implementation of the "first in one of Asia's longest-running conflicts could smooth the way for a $5 billion international-backed reconstruction program in Aceh.

It was also late investors looking for stability in the world's fourth most populous country. The peace deal ovrides Aceh to a biggest share of revenue from its oil and gas fields, which is [illegible].

Jakarta and GAM have blamed one another for sporadic clashes in the province since the deal was agreed last month. Military officials said one rebel was killed on Saturday. GAM says its fighters will start laying down their weapons immediately.

"We are still very worried about the possibility of the Indonesian government not living able to control of the military, but we have to have some faith," Nur Djuli said in an interview.

In Aceh many are cautious of the peace process as too busy rebuilding from the tsunami that left 500,000 people homeless in the devastated Muslim province of 4 million people.

"I'm not sure whether I should be optimistic or pessimistic about this agreement. The Acehnese have been suffering for far too long," says Dahlia a 17-year-old tsunami survivor.

The pact stipulates the Indonesian military cannot move more than a platoon of troops or a tank in Aceh without informing the eight monitors, according to a copy obtained by Reuters.

The province, on the north-west tip of Sumatra island, has a long history of revolt against Jakarta and Dutch colonial rule.

Monitors face a tough task ensuring the warring sides avoid a return to fighting, which ends previous talks. Reuters

Iran backing Iraqi rebel bombers, Time reports

WASHINGTON—An Iranian-backed network of insurgents in Iraq is responsible for a new type of lethal roadside bomb, part of plans by Tehran to influence its neighbor that began even before the US invasion, Time magazine reported on Sunday.

Citing a US military intelligence document, the magazine said that since the past eight months, a network of insurgents led by a man named Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani had introduced bombs based on a design from the Iranian-backed Lebanese militia Hezbollah that successfully pierce battle tanks armor.

The document estimated that al-Sheibani's team comprised 240 members divided into 17 bomb-making teams and death squads, Time said.

The apparatus be part of intervention plan for gaining influence in Iraq that began before the United States invaded in March 2003, Time said. In investigation was based on documents smuggled from Iran and interviews with US, British and Iraqi intelligence officials, as well as an Iranian agent, armed dissidents and Iranian political staffers.

Time cited an unnamed senior US military official in Baghdad as saying one of the new bombs killed three British soldiers in Basra in late month.

Time reports in this would have to have a higher degree of approval (in Tehran)," it quoted the official as saying. Reuters

Nadal flashes hardcourt savvy, trips Agassi for 3rd title in row

RAFAEL Nadal jubilates after beating Andre Agassi in the finals of the Rogers Cup. AP

MONTREAL—Rafael Nadal won on a hardcourt for the first time, beating 35-year-old Andre Agassi, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, to win the Rogers Cup on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Spaniard left-handed dominating unfazed Agassi, who was missing the lines in a baseline battle interrupted 66 minutes after the first set by rain.

It was the top-seed's third victory in a row and his 40-0 record this season, including eight grass-court wins, including the French Open, seven on clay courts.

The French Open champ, who has a 14-match winning streak, won $582,000 (euro 472,140) of the $2.45 million (euro1.99 million) purse while Agassi earned $268,000 (euro 360,310).

Fourth-seeded Agassi, who won nothing off a win in Los Angeles two weeks ago, ended a 11-match winning streak.

It was the first meeting between Nadal and Agassi, who has won 60 tournaments, including eight grand slams and three wins for the Canadian event, in his 19-year career.

The 18-year ago's participation finalists was the largest on the ATP tour since 1999, when 20-year-old Yevgeny Kafelnikov beat 19-year-old Pat Clavijuan in Tel Aviv.

Nadal's four-match 60 match winning this year is second best ever by a teenager to Boris Becker's 63 in 1986. AP

US track bets take 14 golds

HELSINKI, Finland—The blues and fridges flew (higher) when clank-in-wrestled was here true on the athletics World Championships.

After two years of doping scandals, the United States for track-a-thon with a record-breaking 14-gold medal performance, highlighted Sunday with a second gold for 400 champion Jeremy Wariner in the 1,600 relay.

Together with 100 and 200 champion Justin Gatlin and 100 and 400 relay champion Lauryn Williams, Wariner epitomized a young and sponsorship-tailored US squad which could dominate the sport even beyond the 2007 World Championships and up to the 2008 Olympics.

"The average age of the gold medalists is 23.5 so when you're thinking about moving forward to Beijing and Osaka before that, you have to feel pretty good about that," IAA Track and Field executive director Craig Masback said.

On a less cheering (in Britain and Europe anyway) humiliation by winning their first gold medals, Britain's hard luck marathon runner Paula Radcliffe was her first major title and Benjamin Limo made sure Ethiopia would not sweep the long-distance events on the track.

Either Olympic champion Gebrselassie Meseskela got a pewter award instead of 75.76 minutes on his first throw, improving on his old mark by 14 centimeters, to win the gold.

He was the third woman to win $1,000,000 (euro 828,440) for setting a world record and winning gold. Olimpiada Ivanova set one in the 20 kilometer walk and fellow Russian Yelena Lashmanova added another in the pole vault. The three world records were the most at a World Championships in a decade and the lack of a major doping scandal left the IAAF with bad memories of the Finnish capital. AP

Phil retains lead as storm halts PGA Championship

PHIL Mickelson pumps his fist after making a birdie on the 12th hole. REUTERS

SPRINGFIELD, New Jersey—Phil Mickelson ended Sunday on top of the US PGA Championship leaderboard but left without a title after a second lightning suspension forced the year's final major into a Monday finish.

With lightning crackling around Baltusrol Golf Club, officials sounded the horns to clear the Lower Course before announcing that play would resume the following day at 10:30 a.m.

The 87th US PGA Championship was still wide open for the taking, though, with eight players bunched within three strokes of Mickelson's lead at four-under par with five holes remaining.

Three of them, including world number one Tiger Woods at two under, were safely in the clubhouse.

Tied for second at three under were Australian Steve Elkington, the 1995 US PGA champion, and Thomas Bjorn of Denmark, bidding to become the first European to win the tournament since Seve Ballesteros in 1992 (with ago).

Elkington had finished 11 holes and Bjorn was through 14.

"I love this championship, but I want to lose," said Mickelson, who faced a three-foot par putt on the 14th green before being hurried off as lightning flashed above the course.

Defending champion Vijay Singh and 1997 winner Davis Love III will also be back on Monday, looking par runs down off the lead with three and five holes to play, respectively.

After battling to a two-under par 68 in Friday at two under 278, twice champion Woods still also have to extend his stay in New Jersey if the tournament goes into a three-hole playoff.

It is the first time the US PGA Championship has been forced into a Monday finish since 1996 at Inverness, when American Bob Tway holed out from a bunker on the 72nd hole to beat Greg Norman by two shots.

Sunday's stormy finish at Baltusrol was a fitting conclusion to a turbulent day on the leaderboard.

Love and Mickelson, joint leaders overnight at six under, both struggled for accuracy off the tee in their respective bids to secure a second career major.

Mickelson looked in imperious command when surging two-three-shot lead after five holes before bogeys on six, seven, nine and 10 saw him tumbling down the leaderboard.

With storm clouds building, the bespectacled Love rolled in a 12-foot putt for birdie on 11 to get back to second for the day and retook possession of the lead at four under.

Woods tried to mount a last-day charge, was close to spark as he bogeyed two of the first three holes to slip eight strokes back.

Chances of a third US PGA title seemed remote as Woods snatched the turn his three birdies on the back nine, including 17 and 18, ratcheted him a 68 and left him in the clubhouse waiting to see if the leaders would come back to him. Reuters

TIGER Woods hits on his knees after missing a birdie putt on the 18th hole. AP

VASILEIOS Kasthopoulos cries after his Greek team loses to Lithuania, 65-62. AP

Lithuania five tops world under-21

IRAKLIO, ISLAND—Lithuania won the gold medal after defeating Greece, 65-62, in the Beijing Final game of the FIBA U21 World Championship 2005 in Mar De Plata, Argentina.

During the entire game, no team could take more than a 6-point lead and the public had to wait until the very last second to have a chance to know the winner.

Both teams were still tie 60-60 with 26 seconds to go.

Earlier, J.J. Redick scored a game-high 32 points to lead the United States over Argentina, 113-85, in 3rd-place.

Canada led 76-74 with 36 seconds remaining when Kerry Gallimore secured the victory with three consecutive free throws.

Brad Hawley had 17 points for Australia, which finished 6-2.

In the US series, American Justin Gray saw a total 16 points as the US finished 7-1, its only loss in overtime to Canada in the quarterfinals on Friday when Kendall had a tournament-high 40 points.

The US outrebounded Argentina 41-29 as the Americans shot three-pointers and outmaneuvered the host adults racing to a 61-29 halftime lead. Leonardo Mainoldi had 22 points for Argentina, which finished the tournament 5-3.

Jussi Vesilaji had 19 points to help Puerto Rico to an 86-77 victory over Slovenia for seventh place. AP

GOVERNMENT WARNING: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Publisher ...
Editor in Chief ...
Managing Editor ...
Associate Editors ...
Associate Editor for Business ...
News Editor ...
Opinion Editor ...
Commentary ...
City Editor ...
Assistant Desk Editor ...
Editorial Consultant ...
Chief Photographer ...
Art & Design Director ...
Board of Consultants ...
President ...
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing ...
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services ...
Office Administrator ...
Ad Sales Coordinator ...
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Change in lifestyle

EDITORIAL

OIL futures last week breached the $67-a-barrel mark in New York, and so far no ceiling is in sight. It appears that in the near future as well as in the long term, the global economy is in for another period of high oil prices.

The Philippines, which is 95 percent dependent on fossil fuels for its energy needs, is greatly affected by the imminently rising prices of oil. Asia Times estimates that every dollar increase in the price of Dubai crude adds about P50B million to the country's annual oil bill.

This is additional expenditure that the economy, which is already pressured for funds, can hardly afford. Thus, President Macapagal-Arroyo and business leaders have agreed that the best solution to the oil crisis is to cut down on the country's consumption of 330,000 barrels a day.

A huge reduction in the country's consumption of oil will entail a drastic change in the lifestyle of the people. Many of them will have to walk or bike to work. This will mean not only savings in fares and oil use but also daily exercise, and, ultimately, a healthier work force.

Those who can still afford to drive cars will have to buy hummers and minis instead of the gas-guzzling SUVs, E190's and CRVs. Some may have to switch to scooters or gas-powered skateboards. One version, the TT flame, is light and can be conveniently brought in the dormitories traffic.

Experiments should be pursued on the use of alternative fuels for vehicles such as okra-diesel, coconut methyl ester made from copra, compressed natural gas, ethanol and electricity. Some hybrid vehicles can be run on both gasoline and electricity.

Homeowners will have to cut down on the use of LPG and electricity in the kitchen. One move that runs on alternative fuels is the "grass charcoal" stove that uses biogasifiers made of rawhide, camcorder, pentair shells, twigs and branches. Another is the "fantastic kalan" that uses wood chips, fresh coconut shells, charcoal and any hard combustible material. Several years ago someone made a stove that used compressed and bolted old newspapers. He wonder whatever became of it.

More households will have to be encouraged to use solar energy for their daily needs. Some people think that solar energy is expensive. The initial installation of solar panels may be expensive, but in the long run, solar energy can be economical. In Negros Oriental last year, a study showed that for as low as P340 a month, rural households can run modern conveniences such as televisions sets, electric lights, radio sets and even blenders using solar energy.

A 5-watt system can be installed for P35,000. In Negros Oriental, people can buy it for only P20,000 because they can get a P15,000 discount through a grant from the Netherlands government and a P5,000 subsidy from the provincial government.

The architecture of office buildings and homes will have to be changed to reduce the use of electricity for air-conditioning. For starters, houses can be designed so as to allow the maximum circulation of air. High ceilings, many windows and doors and *sawalebas* or sliding wooden windows beneath the big windows of old houses.

Filipino architects would do well to study Arabic architecture, particularly that of Saudi Arabia. In Jeddah the most striking feature on the façade of a typical townhouse are the *roshdies*, giant bay windows. The latticed *roshdies* serve three functions: providing privacy, reducing the appearance of the house and providing good ventilation.

Today many public buildings and private homes have to use air-conditioning because their architecture is Western; they are designed so as to conserve heat for fall, winter and early spring. This is illogical; we don't have winter in the Philippines. Why not use tropical architecture for a tropical country like ours?

Because less air-conditioning will be used (we hope), people will also have to change the way they dress. Off with the heavy, thick and dark-colored woolen and fabric suits. Instead, more clothes made of cotton, linen and ramie will have to be used. For formal occasions, the elegant *piña* and *jusi* will have to be used, but ramie way must be found to bring down their prices.

For the poor, the current oil crisis will mean more scrimping and greater deprivation. The rich, for their part, could help reduce the consumption of costly oil by changing their lifestyle and adopting the philosophy of voluntary simplicity. Mahbubulhaq has said that energy conservation is now a matter of national survival. Everyone will have to contribute to the effort to reduce air-conditioning if we are to keep our head above the waves.

Skies smeared grey

VIEWPOINT

Jose L. Mercado

"Smog" is a newcomer in our pollution-related vocabulary. An earlier entry was "inclusion," which is now rarely encountered as late- and fourth-known only as one day. Which one came from oil-rich Saddam's not fact.

Yet, haven only for its part—but also world as a—of our environment. And cosmic spectaculars that this country, which designated to God, given forests, is increasingly dependent on those of its neighbors.

Smog, as we know it in Southeast Asia's romantic "haze." The Kalimantan peasants savages "Food will not only as long as forests do," he, regional food security to feed up to China has a big timber trends. Southeast does is our net source for timber imports.

More than half (57 percent) of the country was still forested in 1934, latest figure cement Secretary Victor Ramos and Forester Backersmary Florentino Tesoro told the 2005 Philippine Forestry Development Forum. Today that is down to 18 percent...far below the 30 percent minimum benchmark, doctor's is disappearing.

Flash floods, landslides and drought Quezon demonstrates the impact. Denuded areas are bleakened by sterile expanses. And economic is stumbling.

In the 1960s, lumber, plywood and logs were the country's fifth richest export. By the 1980s, they dropped to the top 20 list and haven't bounced back since. "If present trends of the world's timber trade to the 2020s, we're today's wood property."

"The land-boundary issue problem in the desert region is not a problem that can be fixed," the Asian Development Bank notes. "It is a problem that must be managed."

Like other issues countries, the Philippines must first hammer into place adequate forest policies. Only then, can we, in concert with others, manage nature's natural resources.

Not of late in cities land grows ever harsh. But lifeless de-sought, nations enough to turn more into barren deserts, says Stefan Bottai, our new

Still, an income regimen on clear land remains a policy keystone as most homeowners' economies. How to craft policy instruments that will provide economic incentives to discourage destroy of land fit lies to the key challenge.

"Smog is a problem that will require a hue in an regional cooperation to achieve results," that additionally results from national policy that imposes huge economic costs on the region as a whole, "the ADB notes.

The solution partly lies in mitigation measures. Worth to repeat is now providing bottom-up to get on with it. The second other half lies in preservation at home.

The Philippines provided 4 out of 20 examples of outstanding Asian forest management, the Food and Agriculture Organization reveals in its new study, "In Search of Excellence." The four are: (1) Mount Makiling Forest Reserve, (2) Bislig Mayong, (3) Kalibo's mangrove project, and (4) Sierra Madre's community-based management of second-growth land. Two, the skills on them.

They could transform a policy reform agenda aimed to stop the destruction of forests. Second, could constitute a full plate—from approving the Sustainable Forest Management Act, developing management to local governments to providing economic incentives.

Rugged chains by the impeachment board, personal accusers and personality-grumbling politicians can no matter the setbacks the past?

"We have never seen a problem so big that we can't see over him," Chat Hotchkiss tells in "Pinnacle." But that option is no longer possible. Damage to spilling acres crossed borders "seems dares of Hercules-size."

E-mail: jose_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Virus

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

TO ARCHBISHOP Oscar Cruz belongs the quote of the day. "What kind of government is this?" he saw in a million years already! There are two other quotes from the Pinoy: "It is quite old and moldy. Everything is just about unsavory country."

He said that but took out of short dispute, as his statement began to create and apologize to GMA whom they had earlier implicated in conspiracy. The incident, which took place shortly after four Filipinos, aka Mike Arroyo, arrived from abroad looking like Santa Claus, he must have given some people an early Christmas.

Cruz's words are today's equivalent of Emmanuel Pelaez's quotation of 1941 he twilight of imperial Japan. He was referring to Japan's imbalance after being embroiled on far away fronts. The humiliation of the attack and despite of blackouts is spoke of overwhelmed here. He hastened to contribute efforts of the troops including to purge people the enemies of the divided island. "What is happening to our country is grave!"

Days after Cruz expressed his view were to declare to believing out of all light in this country, the circumstances did not abide but become a full-blown epidemic. Even people who were doing it on their own cannot pretend to look after their families for basic comforts. Even treatment of small and sick the wrath of the government seems to be of threats rather than the temporary opposition in Makati ang Ginagalit, examination because the latest passing corrupt industry in the country, people do not see the value, if not the virtue, of running their lives on their own.

It's not entirely new, of course, although it has some novel features. Media have known the trick all along in the form of "SCIEC," or "attack and collect, defend and collect." That is the practice, done by opinion-makers in particular, of attacking public figures and collecting from their enemies, then turning around and defending them and collecting from them.

The underworld has another, and better, word for it: blackmail.

What is happening to the country? Quite simply, all decency is being stamped out of it. All the values and institutions the country holds dear are being perverted to support the lowest filth in its president.

At the personal level, the value of the 10 spins around today has turned to Japanese monitor 500 exchanges to Japanese money which, even at its worst, the big day Japanese Yen was at, now when 95 Japan brought bankrolls of it to buy motorbikes of cars, never became free cheap. (I know we are a forgetful country and cannot remember a day after payday of how or moved something, where one's word was one's credit, when a "gentleman's agreement" any apologies to the business, but that phrase is historical, are promised into more mended than a written contract, but I don't know why, or how, we have sunk this low. These days, it has become the routine thing to cannot be overstating you to hold dear. You can never be sure if what is become transformation, or temporarily liable. At worst, you can clutches say "I am sorry" with the voice of a zombie.

Can you blame the citizen for treating their word as a commodity to be used issued off to the highest bidder when they have a president that has just shown that you could become president by doing so? Or indeed senator or to doing so? The senator is not that Drato's an unsavory one, the senator is that they held out for as low as they did. Indeed, the senator is not that President by his gutter code but, the senator to what they were put would on the floor place.

At the national level, the value of laws has been dropped even more. Laws are so good only in the solicitor's will a willing to enforce them. Rules and prescriptions seem nothing if someone can easily flout them and get away with it. Or if someone can pursuing "I don't care about the law, they're what I want," and the people just clang their shoulders and say, "Well, OK then."

The reason I am not particularly enthusiastic about an impeachment trial is not that, even if it passed in the House, it can be concluded the way the counting of the votes in the last elections was indicated by Powers, "Kontra Daya" et al., to find GMA not guilty of stealing the presidency. It is simply that even if after months trying to buy off the impeachment court, GMA were somehow found guilty as charged, what of it? She can always ignore, or refuse to accept, the verdict of the impeachment court, and say she still not step down because the impeachment court is wrong. And close the world to force her out.

She has already done it. What can an impeachment court does mean that SBA has not already admitted? When she endorsed some measure to be the person who "violated" Cory, she admitted not just to an impeachable offense but to a criminal one. This is not a case where a president betrayed the public trust, this is a case where a man punished denounced the public still, for all the real war. I refuse to accept that it is a crime, I refuse to believe I do not accept that it is a crime, I refuse to believe I do not accept Makati ang, I refuse to accept them, and we seem powerless to make her do so. Why should we expect anything different after an impeachment trial? Indeed why should we expect anything different even after 2010?

The current scapegoat of Malacañang is the single biggest virus in this country. Not least is reality. She is making people sick physically, some of them, including a couple of her close, real kin, have already died. But more than making this country sick in the body, she is making this country sick in the head. For how a country whose entire the individual's word are the nation's have none anything anymore, you have nothing. And a real black road where Ms Philippines used to be.

Jack Foust once it means to be safe in the end. Or because.

Abiding by the 'Cory Constitution'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MALACAÑANG Secretary Michael Defensor was apparently beating media attack during his press conference last week when he propended expert testimony about the alleged manipulation of the "Hello Garci." There was even some bedding. The Senility Secretary should be hardly surprising, for such senility of the tapes goes to the very heart of the electoral fraud case against President Macapagal-Arroyo. Since then, some media fair has been concentrated on discrediting one of his witnesses: former Commission on Elections chairman Virgilio Garcillano.

In my mind, what Defensor's much-maligned effort was able to establish is that the tapes cannot be relied upon as the "uncontested source of the "truth," that's it. Before, the Arroyo's fiercest critics were unshakeable in their belief, but granted that the appear to have been tampered with.

* * *

I read the five-page "forensic analysis" made by Enrique Oreta from tapes encoded in our 1,000-cell wireless memory by the US government, major news networks abroad and private investigators. Despite the hyperbole that greeted Defensor's declaration, Oreta's conclusion is not categorical. Based on his own opinion, based on the examination of the copy provided, that several anomalies exist which questions the integrity of the "Hello Garci" tapes. Oreta's report is the earlier version, the so-called "Pagsta tapes"—NBI. The results suggest that the audio is the resultant of several recasions, which involved the audio being recorded, encoded/decoded by different devices. With the exception of the evaluation of fundamental frequency (abbreviated as 00:00:10.000 to 00:00:31.00), several anomalies associated with the time domain of 00:00:10.000 to 00:00:31.00 requires further examination of comparative exemplars recorded by the original recording."

The opposition has sought to discredit the Department by claiming they are not the "original" tapes. Even Senator Edgardo Angara has said the original, and so does Hamletian Inkera. Who's killing the messenger, journalists are accusing. Any assertion is only good to show that taken from any angle, these tapes cannot be used to impeach the President.

* * *

Neither President Cory Aquino and Senate President Franklin Drilon made a big issue out in Archbishop Angel Lagdameo of Dadiz City last week and papers said they talked about the impeachment process. There was no significant story. Lagdameo will assume the presidency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in November. His statements and actions will be closely sought to construe Lagdameo that the CBCP should press the House to send the impeachment case to the Senate forced, in order to find out the "truth" about the charges against GMA.

* * *

But I hope the good archbishop and the CBCP would also take the time to read the position paper published in this newspaper of four respected members of the Philippine Bar Association (Integrated Bar) in favor of Judge Felicitas Aquino, Judge Federico Alikpala Jr., Ignacio B. Sala Jr. and Federico Agustin). The four members that the Constitution as well as cases decided by the Supreme Court, such as Francisco vs. House of Representatives, clearly state that there can only be one impeachment complaint filed against an impeachable official in a given year. In their estimation, the complaint that ought to be considered is the House resolution containing the one filed by former Solicitor General Francisco Tatad, which was dismissed by Rep. Rodolfo Mercado. The former SolGen probably reasoned that the second complaint filed by Rep. Gilbert Remulla did not appear to be considered because it is an entirely new complaint, unrecognizable from the Lozano original, since it added many new and substantial allegations, and is quite inferior in procedure.

* * *

This one-year ban is the core constitutional issue that the justice committee will tackle, and the growing consensus there seems to be to recognize the Lozano complaint. This issue, as well as the validity of tapes that were illegally acquired under the Anti-Wiretapping Law, will be fiercely debated in the committee. But the first person who ought to uphold that provision of the Constitution should be ex-President Cory Aquino, for it was she who, after the 1987 Constitution was framed, ratified and promulgated. As a matter of fact, it is always referred to as the "Cory Constitution" and she has been so protective of it, rejecting any amendment.

* * *

But now, the opposition to GMA, of which Ms Aquino is a part, is saying that the people cannot find out the "truth" if the Lozano complaint, which has several hours more than the amended complaint, is the one recognized by the committee. There's a lot of effort to appeal to the emotions in that argument, and the majority lawmakers will be portrayed as "supposedly" against the truth. But if you start playing constitutional procedures to suit our desires and inhibitions, what is going to happen? It will lead to chaos and anarchy. As for the Lozano complaint, unwanted as it is, there is otherwise to strike out the new charges that are vague, confusion and incessant destabilization."

* * *

But who did the opposition pick such a loser organizer to lead them in the streets? Her columnist Ana Marie Pamintuan opined in her column yesterday that "If there had not been a stampede among politicians and lawyers to grab the limelight and take credit for bringing down yet another president, a better organizer than Lozano could have been prepared, and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo might have been brought down faster and easier." She mentioned "its lacking out spreaders, and its lack of charisma. But if you start playing the rules of how President Arroyo might be booted out, but it cannot be in a way that's so messy we are going to regret for the next 20 years that we have to sit under the presidency for another "Well said.

Still counting stars

Advertisement

YOUNG BLOOD

Hannah Faye M. Marcelle

My sister is now younger. I would climb to the roof of our house whenever there was a power interruption in our neighborhood, which was often. As I climbed up the ladder, I would mumble words of disgust with the electric cooperative for being so inefficient. I'll continue to complain as I lay on my back, but once I sensed my gaze to the heavens, my mood would change. Evenings without electricity were always the best times to go into gazing.

My favorite time to gaze was after my father called me and my sisters "Dita Marina." He pointed to a row of three bright stars in the sky and told the story we've sometimes called the "Tres Marias" constellation. The three stars, I found out later, composed Orion's Belt in the constellation Orion.

And so began a habit that I'd do every time power went out. I was just glad that there was no electricity as a dim ambiance soon revealed it. On the first year I spent looking up to the heavens, questions began to pop in my head: How alone is God? What makes falling stars fall? Why did they call them "falling stars" when they could also fall upward? After impatiently, I asked: Who made all these heavenly bodies?

I asked my father, hoping to get closer the answers. He told me God made the ball.

I pursued the questions: Who made God? "No one," he said. "He's God, you know. He was right to question his answers and questions.

"But God doesn't have time for asking such questions," he lectured in answer me. "Young kids like you tend to ask open-ended lot."

I protested: "How can it be that the universe just came to be? I still find just suspicious, too!"

"To me, too!" I understood. "We just have to have faith," my father replied, smiling.

Faith is such a vague word. We say we have to or believe, but faith requires you to believe even without seeing. And for a young child like me then, faith was hard to understand.

"To me, faith is like this," he said. "We are in a situated school, science began to teach me a lot of things about the world I didn't fully understand and the faith I was trying to believe. His school now me grow my first years and identify my pain. Electronics school taught me all about the human body and how it works. Physics taught me how the universe is a little cluster to me the world I lived, with my Physics, Chemistry and Science Research subjects. I was fascinated as the universe further, learning the principal laws that governed it. Thirteen years of school prior to college taught me to learn and understand the concepts and phenomena involved in the learning life. I had to learn about the chemistry and thermodynamics in an attempt to understand life and the laws of the universe. And whatever I learned seemingly new and fascinating, I was awed and then I would say to myself, 'So that's how God does it! Wow!'

It's only in college that I realized the universe operates by a certain logic that is unmistakably similar and consistent. The more we learn of something, the more we appreciate the powerful intelligence behind the many wonderful designs and functions that God's humanity and the rest of creation. Each science as a much later date, when we've been enlightened and knowledge value not still don't know and can not do as facts humans.

In college, we are taught things in a higher level and encouraged to gain a more profound understanding of our environment. I have realized that faith doesn't need to be blind faith. Faith should be faith that is based on reason and with our eyes as all. God reveals Himself in all creation—in land, on sea, and in the heavens and beyond. God reveals Himself both in the simplest and most complex of creations.

Questions I previously asked, like why a falling star falls or why stars twinkle, have been answered. As in the existence of others, I have come to realize that there is a reason even as to what goes beyond the outer space. But ask the any time who made the universe and I can answer just with assertion. Science may have not opened the last window of creation yet. Inspired in the film "The Creation of the Universe," I believe that the "big bang" and "cosmic" words of evidence Can't be Easier discoveries to control all point to an intelligence beyond human comprehension.

At times, I dare ask why humans feel the want and the need as future things. It may be that we were hard-wired as conscious beings who are also intelligent enough to find answers to our questions about the origin of the universe. After all, are were made in the image of the Creator which behind all these wonders. But since we are nanoseconds, we could never be all-knowing like Him. Gaining the professional knowledge, edge of everything would be quite impossible. My father was right—we were not meant to understand all things. Sometimes, you just have to have faith.

Last summer, five from the pleasures of school, I once again looked up to the heavens at night and I wished upon a falling star that I may never be deprived of star gazing and that I would continue to appreciate every spectacle I see and deepen my faith further in the One who made them all possible.

Just like what I did in my younger and more carefree days, I looked up to the heavens and attempted to count the stars that twinkled brightly. I kept counting even though I knew that I would never be able to reach a definite.

I still continue to counting stars at night—for the fun and beauty of it, and because it comforts me.

Hannah Faye M. Marcelle, 18, is a third year AB Communication student at Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTES TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your valid and full information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you are with.

THE INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
"The National Association of Philippine Newspapers"

Citizens' Impeachment Watch

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

VOTE as Congress debates the many complicated rules and constitutional pitfalls for handling the impeachment complaints against President Arroyo, citizens' groups have been formed to monitor the progress (or lack of it) made in determining the validity of the charges raised against the Arroyo and the appreciation of the evidences presented.

Among the activities both ongoing and planned of Citizens' Impeachment Watch are: organizing and establishing links with the outside forces (business, academe, professionals), organizing groups in the provinces and in the cities, setting up a Congress through house-watching campaigns and personal meetings with legislators during the impeachment process, putting up "impeachment watchdog sites" to monitor developments in various parts of the country "to let the public know the status of the impeachment case," including in schools and public markets, and building an online information network, possibly through a website, e-mail alerts and online polls.

Some 10 people's organizations and non-government organizations compose the Citizens' Impeachment Watch, including the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), Philippine Bar Association, the student group Alamo, the labor group Paglas and Bantay ICI.

* * *

PVTB since it got caught up in "Garcigate"—the alleged bribery attempt by Garcillano involving telecom attorneys from Bantay people accused the President in the illegal numbers game, the wire-tapped conversations that indicate the President had participated in some dealing the last elections, and even the filing of impeachment complaints—PVTB has all but abandoned its main line of work, which was investigative and study legislation.

One of the measures weighed by women groups was the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act, with Rep. Edcel Lagman as its main sponsor, which was already approved out of committee and had been set for floor deliberations. The proposed law is actually but the latest version of measures filed in Congress in the past 15 years, aiming to provide information and counseling regarding responsible parenthood and guaranteeing reproductive rights to all citizens, regardless of the income or region to belong to.

But while the measure dishes on the issue, the governor of Aurora has gone ahead and passed a provincial ordinance providing for the "Aurora Reproductive Health Care Code of 2005."

* * *

It's really no secret why Aurora should be showing the way, since the incumbent governor is brother Angara-Castillo, who during her term as a representative in Congress had many measures to her credit, including the controversial bill coupling from reproductive health rights, divorce, rights of sexual minorities and rights of battered women.

"It is a very controversial and easy to explain," says Angara-Castillo of the Aurora ordinance, adding that other local governments could easily adopt the measure to their own circumstances and circumstances by adding or removing certain provisions.

Making the unanimous passage of this groundbreaking ordinance only astounding is that half of the provincial board members do not belong to the same political party as the governor. No connection was the alone accusations of rule-making that the governor kept away from elsewhere, limiting her screening to Vice Governor Reynaldo Tangson.

As the governor noted during the seminar, Aurora's laments: "With political will, it can be done!"

Some notes on Manila

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ramón L. Muñoz

THE SMILE Spanish volunteers and missionaries referred to the entire island of Luzon as Manila, according to author Gore who attributed that use to hyperbole in the the Hispanic. The name referred to the capital of the province of the Islands and to the area that they used to do look for this, the people lived in the entire archipelago. This time a name was coined, how a gone wonder took in Manila, Manila, Manila, Manila, Manila 11 nuts + 34 movers and a half-brought.

While in, they do looked the inn, grinding with the wooden hammer in the cavity in each a way to the grain, the grain into a dwelling of [illegible], in a wooden dresser in the and other called bihar where the rice was stored and separated from the chaff.

In this in his Pinoxtia, they opened inn or more looks [illegible] on the most rather than the new people in the inn, and they were reading the rice together. Since it was the manner of the Latinos to keep these mortars under their houses as in from on the street that have been be raised, strangers called the inhabitants [illegible].

Since the removal of the underlying the northeast, a numberless river (would you believe the Pasig?) is raised in the sea and the entire opened to it, a beautiful bay (Manila's universal) some [illegible] and the [illegible] of the city, along riverside and plastic garbage overboard, now, using 50 leagues in its courses. The river descends from a lagoon that is quite large and is in its longest dimension. The other bay [illegible] on one part of this, the natives had their principal settlement, with up to 4,000 houses along both banks of the river and on the shores of the sea in its head and where the land ended. At the back of the settlement were many swamps.

Interlaced with these native villages and along the river banks up to the mouth of the lagoon were many pueblos, hamlets, [illegible] gardens, farms and ranches of [illegible] with more than 2,000 Chinese laborers. A great number of boats crossed the river continually, and the neighborhoods, especially [illegible] and [illegible] were a pleasure to behold. But those who had seen a saints had no equal in the Indies.

Visible from Manila at a distance of three leagues on the west was the bay of Cavite, a small one that was the sheltered part of Cavite, a small one that paved out to the sea. The native called it Cavit, which means a hook or anchor, while the Spaniards called it Cavite. It was quite sheltered from the strong southwesterly gales that formed the most dangerous storms of the bay. The port was shallow and the galleons could not enter well into it and needed those strong cables because of that, they [illegible] being wrecked in port like the two galleons that were finally ordered to leave Manila in 1589 which were lost on the front of Isolas Point and Point.

The population of Cavite consisted mainly of soldiers, since the presidio with its barracks and armories, and the royal [illegible] and [illegible] and the wharf that served the galleons. The important residents were ship pilots, boatmen, crew hands and other galleon officials. There was a parish church and four monastery after Manila, Cavite had the largest [illegible] in the Islands.

Ships could sail under anywhere on the bay, they also boats, abundant with good fish and [illegible] with fresh and [illegible].

Shopping [illegible] supplies [illegible] [illegible] some [illegible] the [illegible] the bay was Marivelles, considered a small but elevated isle that served as a lookout. There was a sentinel there who, upon sighting foreign ships, would [illegible] to warn them of the presence of the [illegible].

Leaving the bay and navigating to the left 14 leagues from Cavite was the cove of Balayan, once known as to Bombon because of the legend of the name name of the bay. Leaving Balayan and navigating around the same [illegible] [illegible] the cove of Batangas was Punta de Alcalde, so called because of the sailplace in its surroundings. In front of the isle of Alcalde was another isle called Caballo, which was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] was uninhabited. Between this isle and the land's end was another port called Malabrahan where many used to conjure and incantation for the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Chinese fleet and his officials were killed by the Chinese crew members on the expedition to recover the fort at Terrace.

Since Part I of Francisco Coloy, "Labor Inmigrati-ng," [illegible] by P. Pablo Pastells, [illegible]

Coco 'loco' compromises

LETTERS

Coconut farmers have long been waiting to benefit from the coco levy funds. The Sandiganbayan, in the case of the CIIF-SMC block, emphasized that it is they who should benefit from the levy. So why offer an out-of-court settlement at this point in time? Whom is the offer coming from?

Coconut farmers believe that the reason for this move is political. The President is facing a serious political crisis brought about by the Garci controversy, and Enrique Cojuangco will line influence over a considerable block in Congress that could swing the vote on the impeachment and Charter change. The perception further diminishes the victim's case in the ruling administration.

Political shrewdness should never subvert social justice issues, especially when they affect a big sector of our society—in this case, the millions of impoverished coconut farmers and their families which comprise almost a third of the population.

—LEILA C. EDMUNDO,
Program Officer I,
Consumer Unionism Reform
Movement Inc., 84 Mayflop Ext., Brgy.
Central, Diliman, Quezon City

TRUCKS loaded with logs wait for the truck ban to expire.

Overloaded trucks on SLEX

Following northward along the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) Toll Ups, Batangas last weekend, I observed some several huge trailer trucks carrying heavy loads such as logs, steel bars, screens, gravel and sand, etc. These cargoes were precariously loaded. With such trucks carrying several tons of cargoes, we could only guess if their loads would spill onto the road or other vehicles to certain episodes or sudden curbs. I did not see any PNCC people checking the trucks for overloading.

There is a law against overloading, and if this is implemented properly and regularly, then the highways and expressways will be safe for travel for all. I hope the operators of the SLEX will perfect the their trucks and make sure they use the proper equipment to monitor overloading on the roadway. The law should be implemented not just in expressways but also in all the roads in the countries.

—JULIETTE HERMOSO,
Senior Living Subdivision,
Pandacan City

Please recall Philreca official's appointment to NEA board.

WITH THE RECENT appointment of Mr. Pedro Bilbao as the Noncommercial Director Administrator board of administrators, we cannot help but think of the recalling measure and humanity of this government institutions.

While we do not question the integrity of Mr. Bilbao—who is still the general manager of the Iloilo Electric Cooperative, Inc. and concurrently president of the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (Philreca), an organization of general managers (GMs) and directors of electric cooperatives (ECs)—we are afraid that he will favor and protect any effect of an electric cooperative who may be the subject of an administrative complaint by any EC members consumers.

This appointment is in violation of our existing laws, particularly Presidential Decree 269, where he was with the NEA administration. He was the GM of three electric cooperatives in Cebu prior to his appointment as NEA administrator in 1991, and he was appointed Philreca president in the recent elections as Presidential Adviser (PA) for Rural Electrification with the rank of secretary.

During his term as NEA administrator, NEA underwent a management and financial crisis for RCI 2000 (Full the 114 ECs) under it. The audits report revealed so many irregularities committed by EC officials. Sadly, despite these findings, NEA did nothing to penalize these EC officers. Thus, we cannot blame the Casaflores Consumers Association (Casaviso) when it filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, a case of fraud and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act against former NEA administrators Pantaleon Alvarez and many other NEA officials for failing to exercise their duties and responsibilities as the supervising and controlling agency of the ECs.

For this reason, we are asking the Arroyo to recall the appointment of Mr. Bilbao so as to ensure the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the NEA board of administrators.

We welcome, instead, the appointment of people with credentials and experience, including those formerly with the Department of Energy. These people, we believe, will be able to streamline the NEA board of administrators into an independent, objective and impartial body. This is needed to push the Rural Electrification Program with the assistance of a successful rural electrification program.

—PETE L. ELACHA,
president,
National Association of Electricity
Consumers for Reforms,
Cinco Compound, 689 Quirino Ave.,
Tambo, Parañaque City

The environment in our hands

THERE is growing concern over the waning political leadership in the Philippines. However, we must also keep in mind that there are other areas of social life other Filipinos and the rest of mankind are seriously or remember.

The effects of the earth's ailing environment may not be immediately noticeable, but they are certainly upending the ecological balance of the world.

The best things that people, Filipinos included, take for granted, such as drinking and cleaning waterways, come and lose that wherever they feel like doing them, such as canal and river. Another global problem that is not just gradually killing our environment but is also threatening the very people tasked to do the research of this earth.

I think it is important for Filipinos to be aware of our surroundings and how to possess our environment. In order for us to live safe lives on an annual as, and wish fresh water and fertile land to fill our hunger and thirst, we each have to do our part. We have just failed to apply the relative strides including basic and other public utility vehicles. Signages and display of trash properly. Reuse and recycle plastic and glass containers. Doing these simple things will make a positive and huge contribution to our environment. In order for us to live safe lives on annual as, and wish fresh water and fertile land to fill our hunger and thirst, we each have to do our part. We have just failed to apply the relative strides including basic and other public utility vehicles. Signages and display of trash properly. Reuse and recycle plastic and glass containers. Doing these simple things will make a positive and huge contribution to our environment.

By uniting and cooperating, we do not just help ourselves; we also help everyone around us. We cannot when once, solve or eliminate the problem of global warming, but we can do something about what we live. We have to start one time so, if we must save the one planet we have been blessed with. And there is no one else to blame if we just passively stand around and wait for the earth to die.

—MICHAEL R. ESCOBAL
c/o aaronyen@globeol.com.ph

No such DENR warning

THIS is in reaction to a news story titled "DENR warns Naga City amid fire toll buildings" (PDI, 8/13/05). There is no mention in the news story, specifically that information that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has consistently classified Naga City as "unfit for habitation."

As two time the regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the DENR, Reynaldo A. San Juan, has stated that: "The gist of our IEC (information, education, communication) campaign is to inform the public to be aware and prepare for the occurrence of flooding brought within the Bicol River Basin since it experiences perennial seasonal flooding. It is our official position that any infra development should consider the result of technical studies such as geohazard assessment and not on fundamental studies. We categorical statement was made in our letter to a limit to the height of construction of buildings since risk will depend on the results of specific studies."

I hope this clarification once and for all corrects whatever wrong information the news story may have engendered on the residents, businessmen and prospective investors of Naga. We are content and that the story might have adversely affected the economic prospects of the city as an up and coming, business friendly metropolis in Southern Luzon.

—JESSE R. ROBREDO,
Assoc. Naga City

CORRECTION by the story: Mr. Director that San Juan confirmed the warning in a cell phone interview.

The gist claimed may showing areas susceptible to "liquefaction" and the details of the information were provided by Romeo Hizonia, Naga City Disaster Management Project head, who said they were involved in the MOA on the danger. The other source was a study on hazard flooding that the Philippine Business for Social Progress did during the time of former Mayor Jaime Fresnedi.

—LUIS ESCUDERO JR.,
correspondent,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

A prayer for righteous leaders

I THANK Conni Bozo for writing an article about the late Sen. Raul Roco. It is indeed unfortunate that we look back at a man's accomplishments only upon his death. Raul Roco was the best choice for president in the last elections. Sadly the present generation of Filipino voters have lost their ability to select the best qualified candidate and opt for issues and 7% personalities as ineffectives in elections.

History tells us that we are capable of choosing good leaders (e.g. Ramon Magsaysay, Carlos Garcia, Fidel Ramos, etc.) but we are now either blinded by temper (succumbing to selling our votes), or we simply lack political immunity while our voices are the corruption and political manipulations is rising to higher levels. I pray that someday the leaders we choose will be honest. I hope that God will allow righteous leaders to lead our country again.

—EUGENE L. RAMOS,
Las Vegas, NV
jenlaw@hotmail.com

Recto's unfinished crusade

THE INQUIRER August 7 editorial, "Sense of the possible," which featured Claro M. Recto with Raul Manglapus and Jovito Salonga, was unfair to Claro M. Recto.

Before Mr. Recto exemplified an uncompromising sense of nation as the great statesman of his time—the Bell Trade Act, the Parity Amendment, Laurel-Langley Act, the US Bases, Philippine Press, nationalization, the Rizal course, etc.—something which carried on land of Manglapus and Salonga. Salonga presided over the Senate and voted for the ratification of the US bases, but his sense of justice on the bases issue has never subscribed his position as the economy. On the other hand, Manglapus' Philippines was basically compatible with US neocolonial policies.

Like Bonifacio's unfinished revolution, Recto's Filipino First crusade is still unfinished.

—ARMANDO GUY PACIENTE,
9160 Mt Union Square Condominium,
Old 11th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Inquirer

Do you think that some witnesses in the wiretapping investigation are being paid off or threatened to keep quiet?

Absolutely yes, the entire administration will do whatever it takes to commit to protect money or death to any person.
—Bernard Bulgar, Pandacan City

I think it's just me, but I have a feeling Gloria is not being truthful. Why else would there be so many witnesses who are being paid off or threatened to keep quiet?
—Josh Quiapao, 24, Antipolo city

Most likely, except the few who are close to the family.
—Andrea L. Rivera

As all leaders of our country, but the bringing out of the truth depends on the willingness of the people. Ah, sana, a strong signal...
—Rachel Chiu, 34, Cavite City

If there fact did do not see how it is fitting, left it say. Else, who's next? Do country won't have another witness but if I had to (God is dead, RIGHT).
—Ian Abena, 24, Antipolo

Yes, they are being threatened to keep quiet, or else something will happen to their family, then pay-off comes. Ano pa pa?
—gerry e. Lumen, 30, computer, manila

Do you believe Capt. Nathan Mendoza's claim that "Garci" said that President Arroyo received P300M from suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda for the elections?

Impossible. It still C, 10, 30, 10 AND 11. I can't believe him...
—JOSE EMMANUEL AS, 10/10/AM city

considering mendoza took it bragged-ried of him like I claim can't believe him. Ano pa pa?
—rob ocampo, 45, Baguio city

No. Mars was raped smashingly, if not sing "bigat" in Class. Loving is like rose: mina-gana kya pati pare ko mesia. Statement is safe!
—Rico Abbas, 29, Baguio City

Hindi totoo yan! She is a family friend of Bong at iba pinsala, bata naman. At, not 300M, siguro! Sana ako nan eh 50M,000!
—Nando Lagos, 42, Alaska city

Hahaha guard will not last if I convince your comelec officials did the pictator of the does pay, it pays big counting of 50M.
—rob ocampo, 45, Baguio city

no. Mendoza should have said it a long time ago. Not now.... when being a witness in a "protection".
—Bertha Lopez, Davao city

Hahahaha si Garci ang sinungaling! Ang lakas pa ng loob niyang sabihin na nagbigay ng 300 million kay Gloria. Kung totoo yan, bakit hindi pa nagsalita ang mga taong nagbigay ng pera kay Garci? Sinungaling talaga si Garci!
—Jayson Sabalvaro

I DO, because DID +800 BUNI IT by way back when SAE RUN 6 YET PACS MONEY was put to bet to recount in BATAAN.
—VIRGINIA, 48, CLSM, Bul

No. It is purely hearsay. It would not even be admissible in court.
—celia cajuba, 58, manila

Do you support calls for the president's impeachment?

yes, she is liar, a cheater, why call garci to produce her vote to vote. damon, when she knew garci was indicted other wayse
—James dupas, 50, Angeles

No, giving her a chance that 2 is "nalto garci tape" is a way we only "coerce" the witnesses. She must step DT.
—Larisa Estandia, 33, General Santos City

NO, the opposition groups are just on the bashing all these wrong moves against the corrupt administration.
—Cesar. Manila

yes, I always vote wrong using Isabel yet I DISAGREE on any impeachment
—Joel Quiroma, Baguio City

Yes ELTT
—jamie ren-e. Bangco, 17, Ilolo

It must not people not to initiate moving, but blame or spoil charges.
—Eli Bartido, 67, Pateros City

YES, I SUPPORT IMPEACHMENT OF PGMA, IS the BEST
—WILLIAM Tan, 36, LALOMA City

yes, it is only logic only if I said PGMA, besides I can even donate a modest amount I can use it impeachment cause.
—gerry cinpoco, Aipan city

If they find any legal / substantial supporting to impeach the president, why not?
—Conrel B. Bujold, pamplona city

Yes. If a opposition have credible evidence. If some wants it wait? staying and vote.
—Rafael de Vera, III, manila city

I support it because, if I removed a president so we Filipinos would know if both is justice still prevails in our country.
—Robert Campos, 50, Baguio City

Yes PRESIDENT IS DOING EVIL, I DON'T SUPPORT impeachment, LET HER FINISH HER TERM.
—Ronny B. Bolinas, 50, QC

Opinion

What is playing on? So now I ask all those people who want the president's head and who have prejudged her guilt based on illegally acquired (wiretapped) evidence, won't you think you are being played by people who opposed him/her? Or maybe it was your role that released the tape. May I ask also, why only now?

Who is playing on? What is your motive for doing this? If the answer is that it was patriotic duty "for the country," "for the sovereignty," My answer to that is, "I have heard that line before." I am incredibly disgusted with Philippine politics.
— Ray E. Rivera Jr.

Dear Readers, Text or send comments, suggestions and views on today's news or how it was delivered. Tell us about the news you encountered in and the things you want improved in your favorite newspaper. Text INQUIRER <space> (any words you'd like to say) and send to 2161 (GLOBE) or 2366 (SUN). The section keywords are indicated in the top of each section.

Across the NATION

100 more soldiers deployed to Samar

By Joey A. Gabieza
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—About 100 soldiers in Southern Leyte will be deployed to Samar Island to help fight communist insurgents in the three Samar provinces.

Maj. Gen. Isidro Pilipiras, commanding chief of the 8th Infantry Division, said the additional number of soldiers would come from the 43rd Infantry Battalion based in Sogod town, Southern Leyte.

"This will help further in our campaign against the enemy. I am optimistic and sure that the insurgency problem on the country's 'island' [in mid], concerning his earlier promise to end insurgency in Eastern Visayas within the year.

He, however, did not say when these soldiers, under Col. Raul Fernando, would be reassigned to Samar Island, which is composed of the provinces of Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar.

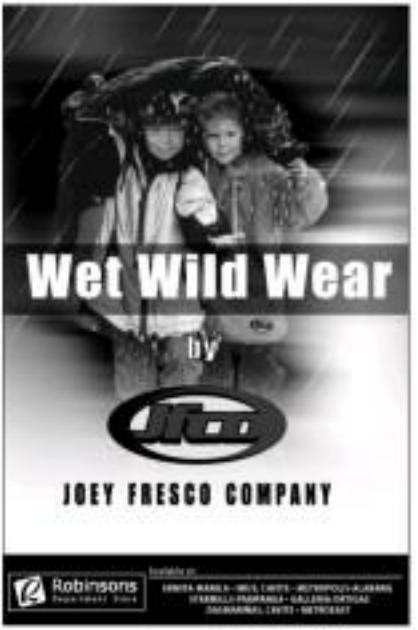
The impending deployment of the troops to Southern Leyte would be the second troop movement.

Last June, Pilipiras said he had deployed more 400 soldiers from Bukid who were deployed to Basey town, Samar under the command of Lt. Col. Manuel Roma.

Roberto de Castro, Region 8 bureau deputy secretary general, dismissed the deployment of troops from Southern Leyte to Samar Island, saying this would not stop insurgency in the region.

He said that even if Philippine forces go to the entire Armed Forces of Philippines to Eastern Visayas, the insurgency would remain in the region, particularly the three provinces, unless the government addressed the problem of poverty.

"This will not help end the insurgency problem in those areas. In fact, government troops in the region and another threat who are members of the New People's Army and yet Filipinos and his men are still in a quandary how to crush them," De Castro said.



ROUNDUP

Dengue strikes in Zambales

IBA, Zambales—Two persons have died of dengue while 118 others have been hospitalized in three months since July this year, health officials said. Dr. Nestor Rasdasal, provincial health officer, identified the fatalities as Jessica Mercel, 7, and Ferdi Mirador, 21, both from Iba. Fourteen others died since Aug. 5 while Mirador died on July 7, Dadayal said. Iba, Cruz has 176 cases, Candelaria, 88, and Masinloc, 18. Officials said 600 students cause have been recorded in the province in the last 30 weeks this year.

Cesar Ilido, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

Best district jail

PAGBILAO, Quezon—The Quezon district jail in Barangay Talipanan in this town was chosen as the "Best District Jail of the Year" during the second 100th anniversary celebration of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. Jail warden Senior Insp. Rainier Lubrica was also awarded James Officer of the Year." During the talent competition, among 11 regional wardens across the country. The BJMP recognized Lubrica's efforts to provide the inhabitants humane conditions while in detention. Besides was the improvement district that received good exciting wives of the inmates. The jail women were also able to secure a total of P50 child food benefits for the use of the inmates. He also organized several livelihood opportunities. Lubrica also access it that the jail inmates are being regularly briefed by their lawyers from the Provincial Attorney's Office.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman robbed, killed

CAMP SEN. N.U.O. SANTOS, Bataan—A 68-year-old woman was stabbed and killed by robbers who barged into her house in Mobline City on Saturday. Police said Marina Dimaglaa, a dealer of herbal medicines, was found dead by her relatives and neighbors in her house in Barangay Bantu. Police said the suspects attacked the victim at around noon Saturday and took her money and other valuables.

Clarinda Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

Quezon trader robbed

LUCENA CITY—A Quezon businessman-cooperative was robbed by two unidentified suspects on Friday morning, police report said. Dulce Clara Jose, 66, a resident of Lucena City, was in her Tagalo Plaza urban community when two suspects blocked the exhibit at the corner of Rizal and Alfonso Streets. The robbers forcibly opened the victim's vehicle and grabbed the Toyota Corolla (XP-200) 2000.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Group opposes tollway rehab

CALOOCAN—Communities south of Metro Manila urged Congress to pursue on the plan to modernize the South Luzon Expressway, at second to the government and first study also urged that the Rep. Rep. Jesus, head of the Road Users Protection Advocates (Rupa), an association of groups and individuals opposed to the extension and reconstruction of, said in a statement Congress should do a reality check because residents of South and subsequently benefit the least 25 years. Group submitted many reasons why tollways "not suitable the coming of the Skyway system that are have questioned in court."

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Illegal logs seized

NEAC, Quezon—Elements of the 41th Police Mobile Group manning a checkpoint in Barangay Mulaw on the Manila-Lucena expressway on Thursday after have stolen recovered 1,000 board feet of newly sawn red lumber allegedly in the vicinity of Sariaya and seized four suspected illegal loggers. Supt. Pedrito Barnes, 41 th PNP, chief, identified the suspects as Jose Sota, Faustino Arbol Mendoza and Eladio Perez—all of Malvilan, Laguna. The truck was registered under the name of the local government of Malvilan.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PATROL BOAT DONATION
Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn shakes hands with PNP Chief Antonio Lumbres as the mayor turns over a P2 million patrol boat to the PNP

Protect burial ground of vets, gov't urged

BAGUIO CITY—Three were the playgrounds of the infamous "White Lady" of Baguio, reportedly three times when Lualhati Road is dark and foggy, residents said not drivers would swear to see the apple legendary apparition by the road near the Camp John Hay Conservancy and Loakang-Loakan Road.

And who wouldn't? The local town of white corsages and the pine trees would make for a menacing backdrop.

Here, these cemeteries are helpless against moral scavengers, as about 200 of the 600 tombstones there have been stolen.

Buried in these cemeteries were Filipino and American Scouts and United States Army servicemen who died during World Wars I and II.

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion Auxiliary-Philippines are asking the city government to protect the remaining graves.

Vice Mayor Nico Rey Bautista said he would also ask the assistance of the American government since these cemeteries should be preserved under the Joint US Military Assistance Group to the Republic of the Philippines (Camag) to help the city government restore the graves and replace the stolen headstones there.

"These areas are parts of the city's history. They should not be desecrated," said Bautista.

Angel Villarubia, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and who served during the Vietnam War, said his group is planning to replace the cemetery but they wanted them preserved.

He said the theft happened only in recent years.

The group is also planning to replace the gate and fence to settle (which) gates in the area) and citizens would not enter the cemeteries.

Villarubia, who has two relatives buried in the John Hay Cemetery, said there was no caretaker for both cemeteries and only relatives and fellow soldiers clean and secure the areas. *Franck Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Slain judge's kin losing hope on case

NAVAL, Biliran Provincial—At least two more days then three years since Judge Eugenia Vallos of the Regional Trial Court Branch 11 in Naval-can, Gamptewhe Valley was assassinated but authorities continue to be clueless as to who masterminded his murder.

"I will there is no hope already we no longer expect to get justice for the assassination of Gerry gone the letter and hopeless justice system in the country," former Biliran Provincial Gov. Cirilo Vallos said of his brother's death.

He said the family has accepted the fact that the judge's death became "part of the statistics of unsolved murders in the country."

Judge Vallos was gunned down by still unidentified gunmen on April 16, 2002 while he was jogging in Parok 7 in Barangay Santa Maria, city in Balinsasayao.

He died from five gunshot wounds in the head.

Prior to his death, Vallos was dragged into the running conflict in Mt. Daraza in Bilaukayo town after he rejected a petition by small-scale miners for a temporary restraining order or a cease-and-desist order issued by former Bilaukayo Mayor Joel Billiones against mining operations in the area.

"We believe that it will no longer be solved as it was a very well-planned assassination that involved the powerful people of Compostela Valley province. As you can see, no one has been charged," the former governor said of his brother's assassination. *Ferdinand Zenaflo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Cavite politics reaches court as gov sues vice gov for graft

CALAMBA CITY—The political plot in Cavite has suddenly turned into a battle in judicial courts.

Gov. Ayong "Boying" Maliksi said he had filed graft and corruption charges before the Ombudsman against his erstwhile ally Vice Gov. Jolo Revilla, for the alleged anomalous P300-million computerization project of the provincial government more than four years ago.

The case was filed on June 6, a month before Revilla filed a similar case of graft and corruption against Maliksi for the supposed "ghost purchase" of P7.5 million worth of rice last year.

Also named respondents in the case filed by Maliksi were five officers of trading US-based companies here: Dendrix Dayland and six officials of Northgate Technologies Inc., a local supplier of computers that won the project.

REVILLA

Pre-bidding

Maliksi's complaint stemmed from the supposed questionable transaction involving the acquisition of 156 computer units for the computerization of the revenue collection system of the provincial government.

He said the project was given to NTI for a whopping contract price of P99.98 million even without public bidding and approval of the provincial council.

The project, known as the Cavite Government Electronic Management System, was formalized through Executive Order 08-2000 issued by then Gov. Ayong "Boying" Revilla Jr. and Revilla.

Revilla, now a senator, ran for reelection in 2001 but eventually lost to Maliksi.

In his 11-page complaint, Maliksi accused Revilla and the other respondents of conspiring with each other to railroad the deal.

COA report

He said a report of the Commission on Audit on July 5, 2004, revealed that the entire project was overpriced by 47 percent or more than P26 million.

The governor said he did not intend for media to pick up the story "because I don't want to do the things (Revilla) has been doing."

"(Revilla) has caused me a lot of troubles by putting me in trial by publicity [after booking the media of the cases he filed against me]. He's really determined to ruin my reputation and get me suspended or he can take over as governor," Maliksi told the Inquirer.

Revilla, however, quickly branded Maliksi's allegations as "a mere political exercise."

He said the case against him was "too shallow."

He likewise questioned Maliksi's decision not to include Revilla in the case.

"Why didn't he include Gonzalez Revilla in the case? I never really participated in any negotiations regarding that project. I was just a witness in (the) transactions. It was (Revilla) who had a hand in the project," Revilla said in a mobile phone interview.

Accusing finger

Maliksi retorted that it was Revilla, not Revilla, who manipulated the entire bidding process and the agreement itself.

Aside from failing to secure the authorization of the provincial council, a report submitted on Oct. 1, 2001, by provincial auditor Florditas Reyes noted that the transaction violated a circular issued by then Presidential Assistant Joseph Estrada.

The circular, issued on Aug. 15, 1998, directed all government units to first seek clearance from the Office of the President before implementing projects worth more than P50 million.

Maliksi said the same COA report noticed that the project violated 17 other provisions of the law on public bidding.

He said the computer units were already delivered a month before NTI won the bid for the project.

Documents showed that it was Revilla himself who received the computers.

Can't remember

Asked why the delivery was ahead of the supposed bidding date, Revilla replied: "I really don't remember when was that. What I can say is that I only did my ministerial duty to receive the deliveries."

Because of the violations, Maliksi had already ordered a stop to the payment for the P76.3-million balance of the project.

Maliksi has accused Malacañang of orchestrating his ouster in order to rain a deal with Revilla.—Gilbert and Grigabe—who are members of Congress for their support in a bid to stop the impeachment case in the House of Representatives.

Marlon Ramos, PDI bandborne Lauren Bernice

Negros Oriental pols make mountain out of molebill over letter

By Felipe V. Calitiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—At "undelivered" invitation letter has threatened to break up the political unity and cooperation between the Capitol and City Hall.

Mayor Antonio del Rosario demanded an explanation from the Capitol as to why he was not invited during the State of the Province Address (SOPA) of Gov. Vicente Bernaldo on Aug. 8.

The mayor wanted to know why Vice Mayor Alan Calibo, a member of the opposition, was invited while he, a political ally, was not.

Del Rosario said he did not give much importance to his presence at the governor's hugs because he would be merely one of the spectators. But he said he was greatly insulted that Calibo was there.

Bernaldo and Del Rosario are political leaders of the Liberal Party (LP) in Cagayan. The governor is the LP provincial chair while the mayor is the city chair.

Almost all the mayors and vice mayors in the province, as well as Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Dacalos (third district), showed up during the SOPA, believed Dumaguete officials and guests from the private sector were there.

Provincial administrator Isaias Bernaldo, the governor's nephew, said he gave the mayor's invitation letter to Alger Bacarisas, senior city tourism officer, when Bacarisas passed by the governor's office, about three days before the SOPA.

The provincial capitol is about 5 minutes from City Hall.

Bernaldo said two female employees of the governor's office witnessed Bacarisas's receipt of the letter.

Bacarisas, however, countered by denied Bernaldo's claim, saying what he got from the governor's office was a newsletter addressed to him.

He said his letters were sometimes mistakenly addressed to the Capitol because he was formerly employed at the governor's office during the time of former Gov. Emilio Macias II.

He urged the governor's office to prove that he was the one who hand-carried the invitation.

Don't throw it all away. Recycle.

Our news is printed on 100% recycled news print, using organic, soy-based ink. We recycle our paper to save at least seven trees a day. We believe in recycling. Because, the good news is, whatever we can do to save our environment will do us a world of good.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

InqBox

Question of the Week

In the wake of higher oil prices, in what specific ways can you help conserve energy?

Senders of (but 20 texts as published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer Shirt")

Buy an inquirer box
Rates/age/city message.
Text your answers to
2332 (Globe/Touch Mobile)
or 2323 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)
Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers can text Jane to 8979828.
Provincial senders can text:
Inquirer ad name/age/city/building address
to 2332 or 2323 as Globe unlimited text messages.

WORKING FEET
Three Bontoc women in traditional garb warm up for a ritual dance on concrete. Modern lifestyles and technology have taken away their cultural significance, but their rituals continue to adjust to the changes.

Public warned of new modus operandi using fake checks of GSIS

By Jovic Arnaiz
PIA Ifugao Bureau

BANAUE CITY—The Government Service Insurance System has warned the public against fake GSIS checks after owners of a computer shop here became the latest victims of a modus operandi involving the checks.

Prominent engineer and his wife Fe, owners of Terex gift shop, said two men went to their shop in the morning of Aug. 8 and asked if they could purchase some items using their GSIS checks.

They identified themselves as Ramon Bendor and Paulo Magat and claimed that they were from Hotel-big town, about 40 km south of here.

They alleged that they were the grantee of two checks worth P44,500, which came from their relative from the GSIS.

One check was dated July 26, 2005, issued as P25,000 while the other was issued on July 22, 2005 and valued at P19,619.

The couple agreed. The two then endorsed the two checks and wrote down their addresses and mobile phone numbers at the back of their checks.

They then bought some items worth P20,000. The couple gave the two P21,419 in cash as change for their P44,419.

The two men, however, did not take the items with them when they rode in their motorcycle. Instead, they told the shops that they would come back as soon as they could find a vehicle to transport their purchases.

The two, however, did not return to the respective shops. The couple reportedly called the alleged phone numbers listed at back of the checks but there was no reply.

The couple became suspicious and they called a nearby GSIS office here to inquire about the checks.

Fortunately, the cashier was at the GSIS office, said Socorro Medrano, GSIS Manila spokesperson.

He said the checks lacked cost because it appeared to be counter checks and there was no reply.

The couple became suspicious and they called a nearby GSIS office here to inquire about the checks.

Fortunately, the cashier was at the GSIS office, said Socorro Medrano, GSIS Manila spokesperson.

He said the checks lacked cost because it appeared to be counter checks and there was no reply.

But when the cashier held the checks, she noticed these were fake because the paper was thin compared to the genuine checks.

Cops gun down ex-soldier who ran amuck

BACOLOD CITY—Police shot dead a disarmed security guard on Sunday after he ran amuck and killed a policeman in Hinigaran town, Negros Occidental.

The fatalities were identified as Salvador Bolongon, former local ranger assigned in Talisay, and SPO2 Bienvenido Arcadio, a member of the 3rd Provincial Mobile Group (PMG).

Police said Bolongon entered the guardhouse of the 3rd PMG at Barangay Ilea Proper, Hinigaran, about 34 km south of here, at about 3 a.m. on Sunday.

The suspect then stabbed Arcadio in the head and throat on separate areas and took the victim's .38 caliber pistol.

He also shot Arcadio in the chest before flagging down a Fast Craft boat in Silay City owned by Eduardo Ong Jan Hi and ordered the owner of the Danilo Bridge in Barangay Pilar, Hinigaran.

Senior Supt. Charles Calima, provincial police director, said Prosperidad cited the house of Army Sgt. Rodrigo Quinsay of the Civil Relations Battalion as the location the driver who owns the house or to retrieve at that time. Nobody answered.

Calima reported the incident to the Hinigaran Police Station, who ordered men to intercept the boat.

Hinigaran policemen immediately responded but their patrol car was shot by the suspect, hitting the right tire.

Supt. Reginaldo Alawasin, Hinigaran police chief, said the suspect was still inside a parked Coaster bus. Later and demanded the keys from the driver, Governor Cordero.

He said Bolongon was able to push the keys from Cordero only to the new vehicle to the driver.

Pedregosa was also joined down by SPO1 Ernesto Macla during current operations in Barangay Pilar.

According to witnesses, Pedregosa was depressed due to financial problems. He went to Granada, a relative, believing that the soldier had his wife and that those arms they left their home in Barangay Obar when he began acting strange, the police chief said. Carla Lomay, PIA Visayas Bureau

Separate holding of local, nat'l polls sought

MARAWI CITY—An amendment to the Constitution seeking to de-synchronize national and local elections is imperative to keep the country's electoral exercises more manageable and orderly.

Commission on Elections (Comelec) Commissioner Resurreccion Borra made this observation in the light of the recent political exercise in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) whereby the postponement of elections was completed two days after the balloting was held.

On Aug. 13, two days after the casting of ballots the winners for regional assembly seats were declared in most provinces, and by Thursday afternoon, the new governor and vice governors of the autonomous region were proclaimed.

This is a record time in the history of elections in the ARMM and even in the country according to election officials.

"The faster the process is, the more credible the results are," Borra said.

The speed is principally attributed to the small number of positions at stake and votes received in precincts and the canvassing of the votes cast was fast.

Last week's election was held to choose the ARMM's governor, vice governor and 24 representatives to the regional legislative assembly which are elected from seven district in five provinces. A total of 124 individuals vied for the seven seats up for grabs.

In each ballot, a voter is asked to fill only five slots. The governor, vice governor and three regional assembly representatives.

But this is not the case during the synchronized elections for national and local leaders where the sheer number of posts bears that are being contested makes voting and canvassing a very time-consuming activity. This monstrous job of vote counting will be compounded when a large number of individuals vie for the presidency contested.

Borra said that if the national and local elections were held in separate times, the situation in each electoral scenarios can approximate that of the ARMM elections in terms of manageability.

A simple national election is decreed by the Constitution.

If held separately, Borra calculates that generating names would still be faster even with manual counting.

He also pointed out that even if counting is done electronically, it will still take time to generate results if elections are synchronized.

"It will still be time-consuming to read the names of a string of candidates, wrote the votes they respectively get in order for a computer encoder to tabulate them accurately," he explained.

At this point when the Supreme Court has already ruled on the validity of the contract on the automated counting machines, Borra said Comelec is in its supplies. Borra said the Comelec will be scouting for counting equipment designed "to suit the political culture of the country."

The new counting machines must be "fast, accurate and suitable for Philippine conditions," Bong Resurreccion, PIA Mindanao Bureau

DILG says 'forgotten' town to remain forgotten

BAGUIO CITY—A "forgotten" town not found in any Philippine map may no longer have the legal existence to be recognized by the country's laws, which created the Cordillera Administrative Region, and by the law that bisected Kalinga-Apayao into two separate provinces in 1966, said Benjamin Dacter, DILG Cordillera director.

"This means that its reconstitution has been overtaken by events. And there are indications its creation has many flaws hooked to the political motives of that province," Dacter said, after conducting a week-long investigation of Tinaya's petition.

Interest revived

The Inspector General of Tinaya's Mrs 3 petition to 66 to says last week, after the Philippine Information Agency revived interest in the phantom town.

Six Cordillera records gave any references to Ejudio Quinsan, but researches made by Bureau Director Eli Balinga concludes entire mistakes, indicate that Tinaya had already written those presidents to exist in the town. Tinaya had petitioned former President Corazon Aquino in 1990 and 1992 and President Fidel Ramos in 1994.

Balinga, in a paper, wrote that "the Ejudio Quinsan municipal district was among the 25 towns recreated by the Philippine Republic [sic] Marcos under the Batas Bil No. 76 filed by Rep. Rudolf Luciano of Lanao del Sur."

Balinga said the community proved its existence but after Presidential Proclamation No. 1891 "On the belief that the district could function on its own material resources [that may be] found from Annexation opposite to old Abatan, the Bontoc valley of Ubaya in Bontoc."

No conflict

But the most significant reason, which Ejudio Quinsan residents use to justify separation, is the fact that town's inhabitants have not engaged their neighbors as in tribal conflicts "unlike other districts where tribal quarrels occurred often," he said.

Various tribal feuds occur frequently in Kalinga.

Balinga said "Tinaya seems not to be consistent in Malacanang, Congress and other agencies" because he was an Ilin Republic Act 4695, which separated Mt. Province into three provinces in 1966, acknowledged Ejudio Quinsan's existence.

Section 3 of RA 4695 states that "the province of Kalinga-Apayao shall comprise the subprovinces of Kalinga and Apayao. Land that] includes the municipalities of Balbalan, Lubuagan, Pinukpuk, Tabuk, Tanglag, Tinglayan, Quinsan and Lubuagan in the subprovince of Kalinga shall remain in the province, the sub-province of Kalinga."

But RA 7878, which separated Kalinga and Apayao in 1995, no longer includes Ejudio Quinsan in its territory, Dacter said.

She said the government deficit may also the energy government from pursuing a division of the Kalinga towns of Balbalan, Pinukpuk and Tinaya, Vincent Uchebon, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau

Sayyaf men killed in Maguindanao clash, says Army

ISULAN, Maguindanao—Suspected members of the terror group Abu Sayyaf were killed in a clash with government soldiers in Guindulungan town on Sunday afternoon, the military reported.

Lt. Col. Rosalino del Prado, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said two soldiers, Cpl. Reynaldo Huevera and Pfc. Marcel Bayuha, both of the 40th Infantry Battalion, were wounded in the 20-minute gunfight in the outskirts of Barangay Rebuar in Guindulungan town.

He said Abu Sayyaf leader Ghaffar Labi and his group, with over 30 men, were sighted by their scouts around Rebuar.

"Government units pounded at the information. After the fighting, our soldiers reported that there were bodies in the anchorage of gunfire because of a close encounter," Del Prado said.

But Del Prado could not say how many Abu Sayyaf members were killed.

"In their search, at least six Abu Sayyaf members were killed in clashes with government troops in Maguindanao.

The Abu Sayyaf, which has been blamed for bombings and kidnappings, is one of the two Islamic terrorist groups in the Philippines. The other is the Jemaah Islamiyah, which is said to have links with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and is on the United States' list of terrorist organizations. Jeaffrey Mahilet, Mindanao Bureau

French firm denies it got bulk of ₱1B for rehab of highway

By Delmar Carino
PIA Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO, Benguet—The French consultant supervising the rehabilitation of Baguio-Bontoc highway here denied charges that his firm had taken much of the ₱1 billion loan granted for the World Bank for the project's completion.

Claude Allouche said the consultancy services of his company, the BCEOM Societe Francaise d'Ingenierie based in France, was discussed through a bidding in May 2003, and the fees paid for his services did not go to his pocket but to the Firm.

He said the WB pays his fees through a separate account and not from the fund allotted for Halsema Highway.

Allouche, 52, was reacting to reports that he continues to draw his consultancy fees per Halsema's rehabilitation cannot be completed by September this year.

Mr. Provincial Boy, Victor Dominguez and Benguet Rep. Samuel Dangwa earlier said Allouche, as a consultant, had not been up to task in ensuring that the project would be completed according to its original schedule.

Dominguez also questioned Allouche's decision to endorse the request of Empress, the civil contractor with which Allouche were pros and cons the remaining ₱106 million of the project cost to repair five critical areas along the highway.

The project started in July 2003 and was supposed to be completed in 2005.

Dominguez hinted upon knowing that ₱20-5 million had already been awarded as consultancy fees for the project's extension without due consent for realignment of these, stating that letting these officials approved by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Mario Bandolario, WB project director in charge, told Dominguez in a letter last month that the total payments made to BCEOM for the project package from La Trinidad, Benguet, to Bontoc, Mtgon. (286 km) was ₱229.96 million.

But Dominguez said the project is still already spent ₱670 million that represented almost 58 percent of the rehabilitation cost from La Trinidad to Mt. Data in 88. Province alone.

"The present project has already eaten up ₱200 million in consultancy fees plus ₱126 million in variation orders," Dominguez wrote the DPWH. "Let us stop the requested project variations. We [e] have to do [a] damn [good] correction."

Dominguez said "their must be a limit to the amount of consultancy fees."

He said he local consultants, the he would only be in pursuit of the project cost.

But Allouche said the entire ₱1 billion actually consisted of three parts—construction cost, supervision cost of the consultancy firm and consultancy fees. He said foreign-funded loans require the hiring of foreign consultants.

He said the project's delay is not by Dominguez's fault.

"There are still outstanding right of way disputes and the cause of the delay cannot [not] be[cause] [the project's] work completion," Allouche said.

Being PMA classmates means easy teamwork

By Luige A. del Puerto

IT BEGINS when the heads of the Armed Forces and the national police were classmates at the Philippine Military Academy. It ends only for newer commanders, especially in times of crisis, a senior police official said yesterday.

"Early on, the coordination and dynamics are there," said Deputy Director General Avelino Rosca Jr., referring to his appointment as the PMA Director General Adviser. Rosca, a classmate of Philippine National Police chief Lt. Gen. Arturo Lomibao, the newly designated chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Senga, Lomibao and former AFP chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu are members of PMA Class of 1972.

Rosca's top officials do not have to go far to have each other out, according to Rosca. "They usually meet each other just through body language," he said.

Graduates of the PMA usually land if ever the AFP and the PNP forming another group whose loyalty is often in question rather than to a specific ideology or politics.

PMA ties group both to their younger days, AFP and PNP officials often move to one when forced unlike dynamic choices, such as quelling a coup or mounting one.

Strong spine

When 20 Active Colonels retirement resigned last month and ranked off for being among the AFP under Senga and the PNP under Lomibao stood firm and provided a strong spine to her beleaguered administration.

Echoing each other in many instances, both officials said there were against joining a particular camp. Both men ordered their troops to remain neutral and apolitical amid the worsening political crisis.

So far, no one has publicly disobeyed the order, although a shadowy group claiming to be junior officers of the police and the military have started to bring down Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

Senga was thrust to the second level of the PMA Battle and Senga took care of his underclassmen "like a brother and a father."

Yesterday, the PMP official also praised Lomibao's classmates. Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the incoming Army chief and one of several military generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tape.

"(Esperon) meets that when he was a PMA cadet and appointed as AFP, he was directly supervising the campaign of the AFP in restoring an honest, orderly and peaceful election," Rosca said.

GMA orders AFP chief of staff: Insulate military from politics

Transcript p. A1

of the armed operations command, will formally take over as Army chief on Wednesday, officials said.

Abu reached the mandatory retirement age of 56 in June, but the President extended his term "to ensure the smooth transition of military leadership," her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

Critics accuse Ms Arroyo of using "revolving door" appointments of military chiefs to ensure their loyalty. Ms Arroyo holds the power to promote the highest ranks of AFP chiefs of staff. The director Ferdinand Marcos had seven military chiefs during his two-decade rule.

Senga, who will serve until July 2006, refuses to accept the record to continue the reforms begun by Abu, including streamlining the 113,000-strong military, fighting corruption and maintaining neutrality.

Insulated from politics

"The entire organization must be insulated from politics," he said, stressing the military is meant "only to serve the Filipino people" and not be a symbol of peace."

"The AFP's transformation at this point is not to much the need, imitation of equipment and artillery to match those of more advanced countries. We cannot afford it anyway," he said.

"The transformation that we need today is in changing the way we, soldiers and leaders, think about the challenges and opportunities presented to us by the program for reform."

In her speech at the formal turnover of command ceremony, Ms Arroyo thanked the military for "successfully guarding our democracy, especially these past few months." She referred to no-nonsense that she signed last year's election following allegations that her family pocketed illegal gambling profits.

Although the President has vehemently denied the charges, they have nevertheless set off fierce coup rumors and an unprecedented proceeding against her in Congress.

"General Senga, I expect you to keep the Armed Forces of the Philippines within the Constitution, and do not allow any politician question to undermine the chain of command," Ms Arroyo ordered. "I expect you to think of the troops not only supporting the government."

Retired Lt Gen. Jose Calimlim and foreign militants from the al-Qaeda-linked regional network Jemaah Islamiyah. Philippine troops are fighting communist guerrillas who are active in most parts of the country.

Peace talks

The government is in the midst of Malaysia-brokered peace talks with the largest Moro rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, to try to end a three-decade conflict that has killed 120,000 people and stunted development in the South.

A mobile and trained military is seen as crucial for Ms Arroyo to maintain her hold on power. Her parents against her, based on wiretapped phone calls, rapped generals may have helped her thwart to the polls, sparking anger among lower to middle-ranking officers.

Ms Arroyo earlier ended 48 two coup attempts—a bloody attempt by opposition of second president Joseph Estrada to storm Malacañang in May 2001, and a least military takeover of the capitol Oakwood apartment complex in Makati City two years ago.

His supposed disappointment that congressional hearings have "maligned" senior military officers, some of whom were implicated in vote-rigging allegations against Ms Arroyo, and laziness that entered officers have made to entice active members to be against the administration.

But added politicians and retired officers aid to interfere in the military's internal affairs. "Leave us alone," he implored.

The President credited this with weathering the military leadership's call abolishing the office of the AFP comptroller.

"All those resulted in a leaner organization and a more effective and transparent distribution and utilization of personnel, logistics and financial resources," she said in her speech.

Role model

Welcoming Senga to the helm of the AFP, Ms Arroyo cautioned the new chief to be a role model, not a dictator. "Your troops will look up to you for guidance, especially in the coming elections."

"Especially at a time like this, as General Abu said, when there are so many attempts to drive a wedge between the senior officers and the young officers," she said.

"Soldiers, self-sacrifice and courage are not the monopoly of the youth but I have seen in our senior officers' [the General Senga the same outstanding quality."

She added: "I instruct the new AFP leadership under General Senga to engage in renewed dialogue with the young officers to show them all officers regardless of length of service are equally committed to the values for which they have dedicated their lives." With reports from AP and Reuters

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

AFP	Navy	Appointment
August Rayos	July 1999-Dec 2000	Secretary, Department of National Defense (Sec.) (Dec. 1 August 2000); Ambassador to Russia (Dec. 2000-2004); Ambassador to Ukraine (2004-present); Chief, National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Nov. 2000-2001); Chief, Philippine National Police (2001-2002); Chief, Philippine Public Safety College (2002-present); Chief, Philippine National Police (2002-2003); Chief, Philippine Public Safety College (2003-present); Chief, Philippine National Police (2003-2004); Chief, Philippine Public Safety College (2004-present); Chief, Philippine National Police (2004-present

METRO
Edited by Conrad G. Dizon

EZ2 SUERTRES FOUR DIGIT
15 | 1 1 7 | 1 6 9 1
[no result number]

MEGALOTTO 6/45
2 4 13 23 35 39
₱24,963,655.50

2 die as robbers strike

By Edson C. Tarabay Jr.

TWO HOLDUPS left two persons dead in the center of Valenzuela and Pasig yesterday.

Robbers failed to take any loot in the first but two died after the driver of a van carrying P1.4 million in money fled, hitting a motorcycle and a passerby.

Edward Yeung, 24, and his wife Sarah, 21, had just withdrawn P250,000 from the China Bank branch in Barangay Ilaya, Binan, Manila, and were on their way to Barangay Bayan-Bayanan when two gunmen on a motorcycle tried to intercept them.

The gunmen blocked the path of the Yeungs' sedan (Mitsubishi L-300) van but their driver, Glenn Magbanua, 37, stepped on the gas.

City police chief Manuel Gaerlan said one of the men, who was armed with a .45-caliber pistol, apparently panicked and opened fire, hitting Magbanua.

A bullet hit the driver in the head and killed him instantly.

When the van stopped, the robbers drove up to the vehicle and again opened fire, hitting Yeung and Sarah.

Yeung, who suffered several gunshot wounds, was already unconscious by the time he reached the hospital, Gaerlan said. Sarah was hit in the left arm.

Henry Ong, a security guard of the Philippine Business Bank in Pasig City, another group of armed men robbed an armored van that was delivering money to a remittance company at the Discovery Suites building on ADB Avenue.

The incident left four people wounded and a still undetermined amount of money in the hands of robbers.

The armored van of the BFP Inc. with body number 3246 arrived in front of the building at about 9:20 a.m., Pasig City police chief Raul Medina said.

ORTIGAS CENTER ROBBERY

ROBBERS failed to take money from the van at right.

The drivers parked the van near the back entrance of the building, near HSBC Bank.

Medina said the van came from the Bank Branch in Makati City and was to deliver bags of cash to *Li Benin Company* at the 20th Floor of the building.

But just as bank teller Anthony Lamsang and two van security escorts unloaded the first bag of cash, a blue Mitsubishi Adventure sped past the van.

Three men, one of whom was wearing a police barong accordingly to witnesses, got off and started to pepper the building with bullets from M-16 assault rifles and .45-caliber pistols.

Some of the robbers turned to the Lamsang and the guards, who were already carrying the bag, near the entrance door.

The security guards carrying the money into the building were not able to fire back because they had left their guns inside the armored van.

Investigator PO3 Sandy Bagayaua said it was a police officer the building not to allow guns inside the building.

The robbers shot security guard Nemuel Villanos, 37, hitting him in the right leg. Lamsang, caught never inside the building, leaving a bag on the stairs.

The robbers grabbed the bag while some of them turned to the armored van, still loaded with several bags of cash.

But armored van driver Jose Melchor Jr. was quick to close the door forcing the robbers to leave without taking money from the van.

Police later found the abandoned getaway vehicle parked in front of The Fort Chic Bar and Grill Restaurant at the Bridge Suites Ortigas Compound in Barangay Ugong, less than half a kilometer from the crime scene.

A source told the inquirer be sure the occupants of the Blue Mitsubishi Adventure transfer to a white Toyota Revo.

FAST FACTS

- Estimated take of ₱7 M in attempt at Discovery Suites at about 9:30 a.m.
- Three to five men involved in heist; two RIB units and operatives on duty opening fire at the building with M-16 rifles and .45-caliber pistols.
- The gunmen take a traffic bypass leaving an undetermined number of cash.
- Robbers fled after almost three minutes. Their getaway vehicle found in front of security restaurant

Groups plan new fare hikes

By Clarissa S. Santos

GASOLINE fuel prices may force public transport groups to press for another ₱2 increase that would raise minimum fares to ₱9.50 while taxis are planning to ask for a ₱20 hike in the current ₱40 flag down rate, representatives of jeepney and taxi groups said.

According to transport groups, they would seek a new round of fare hikes should the prices of gasoline or diesel hit ₱60 to ₱65 per liter. Diesel already costs more than ₱50 a liter in most stations while gasoline fetches more than ₱52 a liter.

Ligaw Mendoza, lawyer for the groups, said they were already looking at a possible fare hike petition of ₱2 for the first 4 kilometers plus 25 centavos on each additional kilometer.

But Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board chair Maria Elena Bautista said the increase requested by the board recently for jeeps and buses was sufficient up to ₱55 a liter.

She said the board would wait for the petition of taxi groups, which has seen an increase last year.

However, Mendoza added, "We assure the public that for as long as the transport groups can hold off any increase, we will try."

But transport groups in Region 8 (Visayas), 10 (Northern Mindanao), 11 (Davao) and 12 (Soccsksargen and Caraga) will press the LTFRB to act on their respective cases as possible.

The LTFRB suspended the implementation of a ₱1 hike in the fare regime for air transport groups weight a ₱2 increase as well.

Jeeps and non-aircon buses had last increased their minimum fare by ₱1 last June 21.

Makati pilot testing coco fuel

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE COUNTRY'S financial center, Makati City, is introducing the use of alternative fuel in both private and public vehicles in the city to cope with the rising cost of oil.

The city government, with the Department of Energy (DOE), the United States Department of Energy (US-DOE), and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Makati will become a pilot testing center for coconut methyl ester (CME), a refined diesel blended with coconut-derived oil.

CME, also dubbed biodiesel, environmentally renewable, reportedly has less harmful emissions; it may also boost incomes of coconut farmers, the city government said.

"China is in a major concern for us in Makati. As the financial capital, Makati has the greatest concentration of vehicles in Metro Manila, and we are definitely concerned about their effects on air quality," said Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay in a statement.

The city has several commercial establishments, institutional and local companies. Some 770,000 vehicles pass through Makati everyday, about 30 percent of the total number of vehicles in Metro Manila.

Binay said a test is expensive at ₱50 per liter, but is may prove cheaper overall by increasing mileage.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said yesterday low gasoline supply will last only until 10 in Urgent Gas Station (UGS) schemes.

The bus dispatch system, announced by Malacañang recently as an energy saving measure, would limit the number of trips buses could make each day based on the volume of passengers on bike.

MMDA computations suggest the UBB can save as much as ₱1.2 billion in fuel expenses if buses will ply their routes only twice a day at days a week. Each operator spends about ₱3,840 a day on fuel for four round-trips. The new schedule would cut a loss' expenses by ₱1,915 a day.

The MMDA said two record trips for each bus would maximize passenger loading. It stated that buses now usually travels half full.

Shampoo used in escape

By DJ Yap

SHAMPOO boy recently been found useful not only in cleaning hair but also giving a crime offender a clean getaway.

Jamael Abang, 21, who was arrested on July 25 in Barangay Commonwealth in Quezon City for selling shabu, managed to escape after he used shampoo in faking a stroke.

On July 30, members of the Quezon City Police Dis. trict Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Group

Jamal Abang 'Pandaking' in the facility at about 4 p.m.

Police believed that he was trying to poison himself by drinking shampoo. They then rushed him to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment.

He was escorted by PO3 Reynaldo Bayuga and another police policeman, investigators said.

Bayuga and his companion waited in doctor's treated Abang.

However, sensing that his wrists were not secured, detainee walked out of the hospital's premises and escaped.

Police have launched a manhunt against Abang, who is believed to have escaped to his hometown in Mindanao.

Report shows Binay et al. cheated gov't

THE COMMISSION on Audit (COA) has found surprising in the purchase of medical and office supplies and "ghost" delivery of some items by the Makati City government led by Mayor Jejomar Binay and his vice mayor, Ernesto Mercado.

The COA reports were the basis for the filing of P602-million plunder case against Binay et al.

The initiation of an exit conference on Feb. 27, 2003 at the COA Building in Quezon City was held through an COA audit report. The meeting was attended by members of a COA special task force, Makati City officials led by Vice Mayor Mercado, and COA auditors assigned to the Makati City Hall.

When Mercado was told at the conference that there was fabrication of documents in the purchase of medical supplies for the Ospital ng Makati amounting to ₱58 million, Mercado blamed the supplier.

According to the COA report:

"After reading the advance copy of the Audit Highlights, pinatawag ko ang Director ng Ospital ng Makati para tanungan at hamapin si Ms Apollo Cameron (proprietor of Apollo Medical Equipment and Supplies). I told and warned Ms Apollo Cameron that if he will not be able to explain the circumstance we will sue him. Sa city government nga."

"Close ties is a major concern for us in Makati. As the financial capital, Makati has the greatest concentration of vehicles in Metro Manila, and we are definitely concerned about their effects on air quality," said Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay in a statement.

The city has several commercial establishments, institutional and local companies. Some 770,000 vehicles pass through Makati everyday, about 30 percent of the total number of vehicles in Metro Manila.

Binay said a test is expensive at ₱50 per liter, but is may prove cheaper overall by increasing mileage.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said yesterday low gasoline supply will last only until 10 in Urgent Gas Station (UGS) schemes.

The bus dispatch system, announced by Malacañang recently as an energy saving measure, would limit the number of trips buses could make each day based on the volume of passengers on bike.

MMDA computations suggest the UBB can save as much as ₱1.2 billion in fuel expenses if buses will ply their routes only twice a day at days a week. Each operator spends about ₱3,840 a day on fuel for four round-trips. The new schedule would cut a loss' expenses by ₱1,915 a day.

The MMDA said two record trips for each bus would maximize passenger loading. It stated that buses now usually travels half full.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

Kanugalan namin, hindi namin kasalanan dahil nabili nun lahat si Apollo. Ibon responsibility, not our fault. Inconcern we ourselves were victims of Apollo's. We've been honest, verification of documents submitted by Apollo were based on information given by Apollo. Binaya ni Apollo. Dahil ang findings ng Team [special] COA (note), we will just ask consideration from the Team because we have no technical expertise in the determination of the specifications of medical equipment. Magsa-file kami ng clarificatory letter Apollo.

Mga Alternado: sana anyang nasa tamang oras ang submission of requisition, although ka-usap ko ang supplier.

C'mon, how could the supplier get one over bright guys like Binay and Mercado!

* * *

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu Saloni went yesterday to his successor, Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga, command of the 1,000,000-strong officers and rank and file.

Abu's departure was welcomed, albeit secretly by most of his subordinates who considered him anything but a leader that looked after the welfare of his men.

Instead of buying medicines and necessary things for the fighting men in the field, Abu focused on non-essential and low-priority projects the unexpired renovation of the sidewalk in Camp Aguinaldo, AFP's general headquarters and the new dining-conference of a resort for officers in Boracay.

An officer with a "star" rank described the sidewalk renovation and construction of the Boracay resort as "ridiculous projects that would not be thought of by any leader except Abu."

Abu also quarreled with his subordinates, the four AFP chiefs he have done so. He withheld operational funds for the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (SAFP) because, according to sources, he was at loggerheads with its chief.

It follows Abu thought the soldiers who punished before him at Camp Aguinaldo punishment yesterday were sincere, he was deadly mistaken.

Those soldiers were not sending him off, they were saying to themselves, "Good riddance, Abu."

INQUIRER Platinum Code

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER 20 YEARS 1985-2005

What five letter adjective made to longer than its opposite is not?

Find the answer to the question in the highlighted letters above. Highlighted letters must be used more than once. Text in your answer to the question to SMART Nasa, and text Cellular subscribers and get a chance to win in the weekly or grand draws!

To join, simply send PSI<space>20<space>answer<space>name<space>address<space>gender to 2678. Ex.: PSI 20 ANSWER Ayala Inquirer Plaza St., Makati City (for supervising answer). Non-registered subscriber simply send PSI<space>20<space>answer<space>name<space>address<space>gender to 2678. Each participant is allowed a maximum of 5 entries per day.

Prizes in stakes
Grand Draw – Six (6) Winners – ₱1,000,000 each
Grand Draw – Two (2) Winners – ₱1,000,000 each
Weekly Draw – Four (4) Winners – ₱100,000 each
Instant Prizes – Ten (10) Winners – ₱10,000 each
Instant Prizes – Twenty (20) Winners – ₱5,000 each
Instant Prizes – Fifty (50) Winners – ₱1,000 each
Instant Prizes – Two Hundred (200) Winners – ₱500 each
Instant Prizes – Five Hundred (500) Winners – ₱100 each
Instant Prizes – Two Thousand (2,000) Winners – ₱50 each
Instant Prizes – Five Thousand (5,000) Winners – ₱20 each
Instant Prizes – Ten Thousand (10,000) Winners – ₱10 each
Instant Prizes – Twenty Thousand (20,000) Winners – ₱5 each
Instant Prizes – Fifty Thousand (50,000) Winners – ₱2 each
Instant Prizes – Two Hundred Thousand (200,000) Winners – ₱1 each

One prize win and there for complete details.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METBRIEFS

GRO sparks brawl

A SALO-SOYPAC Coast Petroleum Diliver (SPC) sparked a brawl inside the Italian ra/Sa ca Restaurant in Quezon City Sunday night that led to the killing of he rold Bingcro, 46, of Bagong Silang, Caloocan City. He was reportedly hit in the head by fellow customer Gary Hidalgo who got involve when an unidentified GRO moved from Villanueva's table to that of Bingcro. *CU Yap*

Makati "terror" treats

TWO BASE that caused a stir on a sidewalk on Ka na near the MRT Guadalupe Station turned out to contain boxes of pastillas or native sweets. The Makati Police Tactical Operations Center sent a bomb disposal unit at 2:15 p.m. to check out the package. MPD chief for operations Supt. Ishiro Tejarotes Jr. said reports of suspicious packages were taken seriously. *Tarra P. Quismundo*

Man in barrel a DVD vendor

ALIVENOT ED identified yesterday the man stashed in side a steel barrel at Alexander Mezarosa, 37, of Filinvest Center, Quezon, Manila. His wife, Ma. Inid polite Sad Mezarosa was a vendor of compact and digital video discs. The victim was also a Mezarosa from Dimasalanga Village, Mariveles. He was last seen by his wife on Aug. 3 at about 3:30 p.m. Three days later, his body was found in a fishpond in Mariveles. *Wilnelly C. Zaragoza*

PNP officer puts life on the line

SENIOR Insp. Honorato Taruma did his bit in the war on illegal gambling and ended giving up everything—including his life—for it.

Taruma, commander of the Tipuqui City Police Community Precinct 5, was stabbed dead when he and two of his men raided an illegal cockfight or "tupada" inside Maravilloso Compound, Barangay Culiacin Pipar, Sunday.

When the three lawmen arrived at the scene past at 10:15 a.m., the more than 20 men engaged in the illegal cockfight scrambled to elude arrest, said Tupiq police chief Supt. Ramon Reyes.

During the commotion, someone stabbed Taruma in the abdomen, Reyes said.

The officer, who hailed from the Mountain Province and who had received two police achievement medals, died while undergoing treatment at the Makati Medical Center.

Mayor Freddie Tinga condemned the killing. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

SORENTO 2.5 CRDI DIESEL

picanto

KIA

The Power To Surprise

Eliminate Gas Pains!

KIA MANDALUYONG

KIA MAKATI

NEW Low Prices!

DELL
Dimension E310
Intel Celeron 2.4GHz Processor
256MB DDR SDRAM
40GB Ultra ATA/100 HDD
17" E770 Monitor
Intel Extreme Graphics
Sound Blaster Compatible
56K V.90 Modem
Windows XP Home Edition
Microsoft Works Suite 2002
1 Year Limited Warranty
Starting at ₱ 29,999
MEGAMARK COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.
Tel: (632) 727-3851 • www.xxx.com.ph

TUESDAY
AUGUST 14, 2001

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

BUSINESS

E-mail: xx_business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net

Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Peso weakens on oil, VAT concerns

Fresh fiscal woes halt T-bill rate slide

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE HIGH level of liquidity in the market was offset by renewed concerns on the fiscal front, forcing treasury bill rates to move sideways.

The 1st-Tender 91-day bills fetched an average rate of 13.622 percent, unchanged from the previous week. "This is unusual," commented Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, considering that banks remained awash with cash.

The 182- and 364-day bills fetched 7.44 percent and 8.6% percent, respectively, hardly moving from last week's levels.

"The market is very liquid, but at the same time banks are apprehensive of going too strong bids because of several concerns," said a treasury official from a leading commercial bank.

The official cited threats of further acceleration in inflation due to the surge in oil prices in new highs, and the uncertainty of the implementation of the expanded value-added tax law.

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER posting strong gains last week, the peso weakened against the US dollar yesterday as runaway global oil prices spooked market sentiment, currency dealers said.

The local currency closed at 55.77, shedding 12.5 centavos from Friday's 55.645 at the Philippine Dealing System, trade firm data over dropdowning oil prices, dealers said the peso can even make up some of its losses against commercial demand.

But an unpeasant demand thinned out later during the day, the peso recovered some of the losses that initially weighed it down to an intra-day low of 55.86 against the greenback.

"The day's close at 55.77 is viewed as a technical rebound," said Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

Traders said the local currency was limited in afternoon trade by the strong regional markets, particularly the rise of the pin against the dollar.

"The market is also looking at the possibility that the value-added tax (VAT) may be delayed and that's a negative," said one trader with a big commercial bank.

(Interest, Finance Secretary Margarita Teves gave an assurance yesterday that the government remained committed to the implementation of the VAT law upon the lifting of a temporary restraint order by the Supreme Court. (For story see page 43.)

Oil prices have resulted toward levels and are seen to surge further in the near term.

The global economist unit of Asian Banc Express Bank, however, expected a downward in the last quarter of the year.

Sheds 12.5 centavos to close at 55.77 to $1

"Now the past few days it has been true worries and US refinery shutdowns has been spooked to the oil price higher," Ravelas said in a recent commentary. But Asian said the actual supply of crude was high and inventories were also strong and that a weaker Chinese economy later this year should slow down oil demand growth.

The bank said oil prices would at some point fall back to the marginal cost of production—the high $30s per barrel—probably starting in the fourth quarter.

The analyst earlier also cautioned to push raising on surging oil prices and the possibility of a further delay in the VAT implementation.

Many point closed 1.08 percent lower yesterday with investors looking profits and snapping a four-day rally which took the market to a seven-week high, dealers said.

They said investors also expressed concern that the government would delay the collection of the new value-added tax (VAT) law, should the Supreme Court lift its 90-day-old restraining order on the statute.

The composite index shed 32.11 points to 2,088.99 in trading between 1,881.34 and 2,090.1 in. Turnover totaled 494.27 million shares worth ₱1.66 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 13.34 points to 1,234.98. Losers beat gainers 93 to 56, while 39 stocks ended unchanged. The peso traded at an average of 55.76 to the dollar by yesterday.

Investors took the VAT issue as an excuse to take profits after the market's rise by more than 1 percent—more than four trading days last week, dealers said.

Senate of Representatives speaker Jose Jalandoni said he had advised President Gloria Arroyo to defer the VAT collection on petroleum until crude oil prices went back to the $30 levels from their all-time highs of more than $40 a barrel.

Dealers said share prices are likely to recover in the coming months after falling to a year-to-date low of 2,089. AFP

CURRENCIES

PESO/DOLLAR RATE

₱ 55.790 ▼
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 13, 2001

₱ 109.836 ▲
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 13, 2001

GOLD: $612.00-613.50

JULY AUGUST

Call-center boom lifts property sector

But political crisis may reverse uptrend

By Dixon L. Lucas

GRADUATE work has absolutely nothing to do with her college degree, she claims.

But she contends it it because "it pays good money" and allows her to buy "stuff" she had always wanted, like clothes in fashion or a

SPECIAL REPORT

low-model cellular phone, and going "gimmicky" once—wine tasting course...a week.

Already is just one of the thousands of fresh graduates who now work for call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO) firms that have set up shop to exploit the country's cheap, English-speaking workforce.

"I don't get to apply anything I learned in my course (economics), but the salary—more than my budget at a fashion outlet during her "lunch break"—which is the case at midnight. "But I think I'm lucky that I have work, especially with the situation in our country now."

Although probably doesn't know it, but the industry she is growing into is generating new jobs and thousands of new jobs each year, but also is putting new life into the country's long dormant property sector.

THE EMERGENCE of the Philippines as an outsourcing destination has boosted the demand for office space. KENNETH

Unmet recovery

Eight years after the outbreak of the East Asian financial crisis, the local property market is on the move once more.

In recent months, property prices across most segments of the industry have been rising at a pace not seen since the mid-1990s. Some economists and market analysts have believe that this trend may signal a gradual return of the long-awaited property boom.

Nowhere is the property recovery more evident than in the demand for office space in Ortigas and Makati and Ortigas central business districts, driven by the boom in call centers and BPOs.

In these areas, rent and capital values for

CONTINUED

WHAT'S INSIDE

Reynolds assets still for sale

An impotent announcement

Court urged to release coco levy assets

Reynolds assets still for sale

By Doris C. Dumlao

CREDITORS of Reynolds Philippines Corp. said they would soon launch another attempt to sell about P361 million worth of company assets after failing to attract buyers in a bidding held recently.

The assets to be sold include Reynolds' plant and equipment, excluding real property in Dasmariñas, Cavite where the manufacturing operations are located, said Omar Salvo, first vice president of creditor Land Bank of the Philippines.

Reynolds' plant and real property are now jointly owned by creditor banks Landbank, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., BCBC Savings Bank and Industrial Development Bank.

Salvo said the committee of creditor banks would deal with the Dasmariñas property separately, noting that the area was now booming especially since a new SM mall has opened nearby.

The bidding for Reynolds' plant and equipment was held last July 26. While there were a number of groups that had expressed interest in buying the assets, only one submitted an offer, which did not even comply with the requirements set by the creditors.

Salvo said the the four banks were now exploring their alternatives on how to dispose of the assets.

"We're studying whether we will (re-)float the parameters and then go through another bidding or set up the terms and open it to negotiated process," Salvo said.

One reason why the bidding might have failed, Salvo noted, was because of pricing issues.

"Since the time that we set the price, the world market prices for metal has gone down," he said.

Another provision that may be revisited, he said, was the requirement that the equipment must be pulled out by the winning bidder within six months.

"Given that scrap metal prices are coming down, some parties are looking at scrapping everything and then using the equipments. For us, we're willing to extend the time, six months might not be enough," Salvo said.

He said the banks would finalize the terms of disposition within the next few days.

"What's important is to have an orderly process. If you have a negotiated sale wherein each one will compromise his own terms, it will be difficult to finalize and each one might end up with 80 percents," Salvo said.

The creditor banks will share the proceeds of the sale.

RPC was established in 1934 by Reynolds International Inc. of the United States. It was into the manufacturing and distribution of aluminum sheets, foil and extruded section used in the packaging, container, construction, appliance manufacturing and vehicle manufacturing industries.

Energy conversation

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

EVEN a giant like San Miguel Corp., based on its latest report to the stock exchange, is suffering from the increase in the prices of just about everything.

Given the sorry state of governance in our country today, plus the past 19 years, I can only say (besides, heaven help all of us down here).

As everybody knows, the costly imported oil is pushing up the price of just about everything here, including perhaps, graft and corruption.

With the timely "let us change the martial-law topic" tactic of the Palace, even the dead in the cemetery knows that oil prices have gone somewhere up there near Mars.

Fortunately for us down here, this new administration already did something about the problem. The Palace already gave us a lot of ... well, "warning."

There, just like that, the problem is solved. It's as if we do not already know, since we are only the ones bearing the pain of it all, anyway.

***

TRUE is cheap, as they say, and cheap is the way of this talkative core administration of Gloriagate. Lordy, did she really have to make that phone call to Garci?

We already know the problem about the stiff price of imported oil. Now, and we are actually looking up to our leaders for a little plan on how to fight it.

And "conversation" now all we could get from the Palace. Brilliant! Now, why did I not think of that? If something is expensive, just don't use it. Perfect!

Hey, just this country to save on oil bills, from now on, nobody goes to all those air-conditioned malls, each of which is the size of the entire Britain.

In other words, it's the steel, old "eighties your belts" again. Never mind that we no longer have belts.

Still, the biggest food and beverage employer/eater in this entire region—San Miguel—is feeling the pinch. This should tell us something about the problem.

And this is, more "conservation" just won't do anymore.

***

TRUE to the case of San Miguel, we notice that the company actually sold a lot more pesos during the first half of the year. Its revenues were 24 percent higher.

Yet, the company suffered a slight drop in its profit of about 4 percent. Its statement to the stock exchange pointed to rising costs as the culprit.

There—San Miguel did its job well, and it sold more goods, which in any business should normally mean it should have made more money. Normally.

But then that did not happen, because San Miguel actually spent more to make and distribute those same goods. It is the same story for all of us down here.

And so, if a giant like San Miguel is hit by rising costs, not to mention the inhospitable business environment from politics, what can we do about here?

The Palace said that we just save on energy. Okay, I already stopped using fuel to cook my food, and I cut everything else. What do I do next, beat?

***

Still to think, San Miguel did not even give us inch to competition. It did not fare better share, which could have eaten into its profitability.

In fact, the company remained the dominant player in all its product lines, particularly beer, meat products and soft drinks.

Of course, some stock market analysts argued that the company could withstand the oil shock better than most businesses here, because of its aggressive expansion overseas.

In the past seven years, the company did a lot of swaggering under the tandem of its chair and CEO, Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., and its vice chair and president, Ramon Ang, and to-day, it is an entirely different San Miguel from it was in 1998.

During those seven years, the company grew the fastest ever, and it made the most money ever.

In effect, the stock market analysts are saying that the company's success must have something to do with management.

It has to be good, at least, if not brilliant. I just don't know if the analysts were blasting something about the core administration's style of managing the economy.

***

OF MARCELLAS interest to me, personally, is the management style of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Michael Defensor.

When Defensor talks, the pace slows here in my barangay vastly lanes. They want to know the truth, and it is the exact opposite of what Defensor is saying.

Only last week, the ever-glib Defensor did something for his besieged boss, Gloriaeta, which no other person in the opposition could have done.

And that is, Defensor single-handedly resurrected public interest, with the help of media, in the waning issue of the "Hello Garci" tapes.

Defensor claimed on national television that a technical expert, imported all the way from Texas in the United States, showed that the "Hello Garci" tapes were fake.

As expected, proving once again that the guys in my barangay had the right idea, the technical guy in Texas denied a lot of the things that Defensor claimed.

I don't know if this development did something to the credibility of the core administration. But at least it proved to us that Defensor is doing everything he can to protect the environment.

For one, his claims on the technical analysis of the "Hello Garci" tapes merely added to the noise pollution.

***

ANYWAY, Defensor must have made a worthwhile investment in the imported technical analysis of the "Hello Garci" tapes, by rehabilitating the issue.

As everybody knows, except perhaps the "tutoring" witnesses who already jailed for forgiveness, politics is not helping the business community.

A lot of investments are on hold, except perhaps mall construction, which is not exactly good for the energy picture, either.

And business is saying that, more than just the call for energy conservation, we need more investments for the economy to exercise its potentials, which is the only way we can overcome this energy crisis.

If business sees that some important investments are being made, every company will dusted making its own investments.

It could be part of the so-called herd mentality in business, even plenty does one thing in the name of competitiveness.

But it has first-rate basis. If some big investments take place, it means more jobs, which in turn means buying power, which means everybody else has a better chance of selling more of his goods.

It's a chain reaction. And it is an offensive move, rather than a defensive one.

***

TO USE the example of San Miguel, in the past years the company has been busy expanding overseas, precisely to tap other markets.

For instance, it acquired Bugis Jaya in Singapore, and in the south market, they know that it was a very fine way for San Miguel's brands of beer to penetrate the Australian market.

It bought other companies, like the juice maker Brew and the dairy line, National Foods. Both companies are well-known local in data. They already have a distribution system, in the country, which is not exactly bad for San Miguel.

Of course, San Miguel did other things than just expand overseas. It sold its minority holdings here, it changed its distribution structure, it (claimed) the hit off its international operations, particularly in Hong Kong.

Still, it is clear that the company's expansion overseas can have a telling effect on its profitability if it can make money elsewhere, maybe in its domestic operations, the company will not have to rather that much during bad times here.

If income overseas can offset any problem in its income here. In a way, it becomes politics-proof.

***

IF THIS core administration wants me to chase us my fingernails over the price of oil, it is succeeding. I have never been so frightened as I am today over any oil crisis, past or present or future.

I'm old enough to remember the first oil crisis more than 25 years ago, in the late '70s and early '80s.

By the way, 1981 was the height of that crisis. The price of oil at 1981 hit the equivalent of $75 per barrel at today's prices.

We are close to the peak. The price of oil in the world markets is now going at $27 per barrel. It will not stay rising, for sure.

That crisis helped a lot in bringing down the Marcos dictatorship, which resorted to short-term loans to pay for trade deficits caused by the oil crisis.

Those loans exploded soon enough by 1985, forcing the regime to declare a debt moratorium, which led to an economic collapse, and eventually to the regime's downfall.

And they say history always has a way of repeating itself.

Megaworld profit up 30%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE BIGGEST seller of its real estate units in the fast-growing Fort-wood City in Quezon City pushed up the net income of property developer Megaworld Corp. in the first six months.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Mega-world said its consolidated net income grew 30 percent to P518.87 million from last year's P398.87 million.

Consolidated revenues jumped 36 percent to P1.39 billion, from P1.56 billion in the same period last year.

Among its product groupings, P1.81 billion or 70 percent of total revenues came from the sale of residential units. The group's real estate sales come from Eastwood City projects, Emerald Avenue, Eastwood Excelsior, One Orchard Road and Eastwood Cyber One; Parkwood Heights in Bel-Air/Salcedo and Essex Parkview; Greenbelt Residences and Greenbelt Parkplace in Makati City. The remaining 18 percent of consolidated revenues or P772.04 million came from rental and hotel operations, interest and other income.

An impotent announcement

ACCORDING to an article in the Inquirer on Saturday, by 2030, 385 million men aged 40 and above will be impotent. The reasons given are diabetes and obesity, caused by too much fast food, smoking, drinking, job stress and lack of exercise. In Nigeria and Eastern Germany, 30 percent of all men admit that they are impotent.

In the Philippines, the rate is lower as there are so many unemployed (no job stress) and we have the highest population growth of any country outside Africa. Statistics come regularly in the Philippines to study the sexual habits of Filipinos. At 75, I remain in fine shape because of tennis twice, no-fat diet plus no drinking, smoking, and daily exercise hosing my goldfish. Admirably my wife services Maggie on my usual every morning. She says that during lovemaking, men should sigh constantly. She says that sighs is important.

Last week, space commuter caused me to miss APOLLO for which I apologize. I also forgot to mention the most important News and, THEN, He had the ability to assume any shape and be visible on earth as a handsome man in order to seduce a beautiful maiden. Afterwards, he stamped his chest and proudly announced, "I'm THOR." "Nick," said the girl, "Thrasts!"

A reader sent me the following story:

My girlfriend and I had been dating for over a year and decided to get married. My girlfriend was a dream but there was one thing that was bothering me. The proposed date was 28 and every right-wing shrink said how ear blisters, the world regularly bend down into me, giving me a spectacular view of her cleavage.

One day her little sister called me to check

Mr. Bearish

Ros Nathan

the wedding invitations. She was alone when I arrived. She said that she had feelings and desires for me that she could not overcome. She said she wanted to make love to me just once before I got married and committed for life.

I was in total shock and could not say a word. She said, "I'm going upstairs in my bedroom and if you want me, just come and get me." I was stunned. I was known to drink and I expected her to rat the shots. When she got to the top, she removed her panties and threw them down the stairs at me.

I stood there for a moment, then turned and went straight to the front door. I opened the door, stepped out of the house and walked straight toward my car. My fiancée's sister was standing outside. With tears in his eyes, he hugged me and said, "We are very happy that you gave him little me. We could not ask for a better man for our daughter. Welcome to the family."

The moral of the story is, always keep your condoms in your car.

* * *

I have good news for readers who bought PH. The SEC has approved the rights issue of 1 for 2 at P1. The record date will be announced shortly and the new shares should be available early in November. If you already hold shares or are thinking of buying them, MAKE SURE THAT YOU TAKE UP THE RIGHTS. To make certain, contact your broker to do so and put into your account sufficient money to pay for the new shares.

The current price is P1.70 and the new shares are being offered at P1 so if you do not take them up, you will be throwing money away and diluting your holding in the company. If possible, hold on shares for the long term as all cell-tower are doing extremely well. At the beginning of the year, there were 40,000 users; by the end of 2005, there are expected to be at least 70,000. The number of texts is anticipated to reach 200,000 by 2010 as this is a

expansion industry in which you should be invested, at present, PI is the only one listed.

There have been good results from ALI, SM and BPIC to AC reported a 49 percent rise in profits in the first half of 2005. Only ALI&M, was disappointing with its net income drop in 2nd quarter profits. I prefer ALI to AC over the long term but I am not recommending it BUY now as I think we may see, for a correction. We failed to break 2000 last Friday, the degree of risk for 100 on Wednesday and there is a tendency for the market to drift lower after the dividend season comes to a close, so you should be out of the market for the time being.

For the long term, I like the MRC, who holds condominiums for sell owners, which are relying not for office space. They are also building a hotel to be run by the Marriott Group (other words that I like long term include ICT, which has positioned excellent results and has first-class management. It has just acquired the rights to operate the post in the island of Mindoro.

Sandiganbayan urged to release coco levy assets

Flying V pioneers sale of coco-biodiesel

BAGUIO CITY—Petroleum product distributor Flying V made a debut with fanfare with the inauguration last week of the first station to sell diesel pre-blended with raw pepper coconut-fuel mix (CME).

Aldrin Magpantay, technical engineer of CME distributor Chemtanco Inc., said the one-per-cent CME mixture can increase mileage by 5.30 percent.

It can also bring down smoke exhaust by as much as 60 percent.

"Currently, we are not really thinking of profit when we started this. We just wanted to promote the development of environment-friendly petroleum products," said Jing Fernandez, business associate of Flying V.

Flying V is using the Intertouch Premium Biodiesel in its product.

Because a 10-percent blend is needed by first-time CME users to clean their engines, the Flying V station is offering the 10-percent blend and discounts this to its P3.180 o-litre or three-pack-ages.

Raymundo said the mix was 60 centavos more expensive than regular diesel, but businessmen were also tempted by the convenient location of the station along Asin Road.

Last week, the station sold about 2,200 litres of the pre-blend fuel.

Most of the customers were jeepney drivers supporting the city's Bantay Kalikasan Program and the Philippine Green Fuel Program (PGFP).

The station's opening coincided with the launch of the Bantay Kalikasan, a program aimed at cleaning up Baguio's air.

A 2000 World Bank report on the environment declared that Baguio has one of the highest concentrations of PM10, or particles smaller than 10 microns, among the Philippines' cities.

PM10 are considered dangerous because they can enter the inner parts of the lungs, causing respiratory illnesses.

One of the demands of the PGFP executive committee to bring down air pollution was the pre-blending of CME to diesel fuel in Baguio.

Before that, CME distributor-like Chemtanco, Sunbel and Flying V, offered the product directly to jeepney drivers.

The drivers, in turn, would add to the mixture to their diesel.

Raymundo said that if the program succeeds in Baguio, Flying V would distribute the product to its more than 100 stations in the country beginning with other PGFP members.

These include the cities of Davao, Cebu and Makati.

Brad Fergusen, Flying V chief operating officer, said the company would soon put up another refilling pre-blend diesel in major villages in Baguio. Avoid Glenda, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau.

By Christine A. Gaylican

UAH Miguel Corp. headquarters

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General has urged the Sandiganbayan to immediately release the coco-levy funded assets in San Miguel Corp., the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) and the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) Group.

In separate motions for execution submitted to the Sandiganbayan last Aug. 9, Associate Solicitor General Wilfredo C. Alvaya and Assistant Solicitor General Amparito Cabotaje-Tang had asked the Supreme Court to implement its decision regarding "the true ownership and transfer of some significant number of shares of stocks in UCPB, CIIF Group and SMC to its rightful owners—the coconut farmers—thereby ensuring respite to any illsuccess."

This would mean that some 71.2 million shares in UCPB, the 27 percent in SMC, and the majority ownership in CIIF would be returned to the Philippine government, as provided under the Supreme Court decision of the 11, 2003.

"This move from the OSG will hasten the court proceedings because in 15 days, the Sandiganbayan could rule in favor of the Philippine government and the small coconut farmers," explained Cocofarm Industry Reform Movement Inc. executive director Jose Ma. Fournier.

Fournier said the dividend earnings from the shares of stocks could be invested in a trust fund for the sole use of the poorest coconut farmers for the development of the Philippine coconut sector.

As of now, only 35 billion could be tapped from the dividend earnings from SMC. However, the industries sector of the high court could reap at least P5 billion yearly could be utilized by the 3.5 million peasant coconut farmers," Fournier said.

Considering the political and economic conditions in the country, the proper use of the questioned UCPB shares derived from the coconut levies funds could be the only hope to genuinely address the problems of the coconut industry, said the Alliance for Executive Office by Gabriela Dang and Others.

"It is only through the execution of the Ombudsman Court's Summary Judgment promulgated on July 11, 2001 that justice would truly be served," the more motion said.

According to the July 11, 2001 judgment of the Supreme Court, "the UCPB shares of stock of the alleged fronts, nominees and dummies of defendants Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr., which is part of the 72 percent shares of the formerly First United Bank and now the UCPB paid for by the Philippine Coconut Authority with public funds later charged to the coconut levy funds, belong to the plaintiff Republic of the Philippines as their true and beneficial owner."

The Supreme Court said the shares of stocks in those companies were purchased through the coco levies collected from peasants coconut farmers since the 1970s and were not bought by Cojuangco.

Mr. Bearbull

From page 82

P81 billion to P100 billion, profits even 10 percent below analysts' expectations due to higher financing costs. They feel that SMC is paying too much for its acquisitions abroad. SMI obviously feels differently as they have just bought 143 million SMC at P63. SMI shall have to wait and see who will be right but on a price/earnings ratio of 37 the shares of SMC24 look expensive.

The stock market has been rising partly because the rebuke of Asia, Europe and the US has been faltering were highs. This is largely because the US economy is continuing to grow and 200,000 jobs were created in July, better than anticipated. The Federal Reserve raised rates for the tenth time in 5.5 percent and still continue to do so. Hourly earnings last month rose 0.4 percent. This might just be a blip but annualized, it is equivalent to an inflation rate of 4.8 percent. The FED wants to keep inflation at or below 2 percent so further increases are inevitable. A strong US is good for Asia, as it is a major importer. The slight revaluation of the yuan also helped improve sentiment.

Another reason for the rise in the PSEI is that the Supreme Court ordered Congress for a copy of the rules regarding the VAT bill. This was immediately interpreted as suggesting that the TRO would be reversed. This does not follow. Obviously, the Supreme Court has to study the rules in great detail before coming to a decision. To this should not be taken as an indication as to which way they will come down this month.

There is speculation that GMA might try to delay the VAT bill as coming that it is approved. I think this most unlikely. The president the now team that she would not interfere in any way. If she does, I am sure that Finance Secretary DENR and his entire team will resign, plunging the country into chaos.

Call-center boom lifts property sector

From page B3

office space increased out in late 2001, having dropped by as much as 60 percent since the property bubble burst.

Prices have been rising steadily since.

In the second quarter alone, rent prices have risen by an average of 9 percent from the previous quarter due to the increasing demand for office space and limited supply, according to property consultancy firm Jones Lang LaSalle.

"The emergence of the Philippines as an outsourcing destination has boosted the demand for office space," the firm observes. "This demand is mainly driven by the entry and expansion of call centers and BPO companies."

As a result, the vacancy rate in prime office buildings has declined to only 3.3 percent in the second quarter of the year. In its latest research bulletin, Jones Lang LaSalle estimates that the vacancy rate will drop further to 1.6 percent—a level nonexistent since the start of the 1990s building boom—by the end of 2003.

The reason for this is the classic confluence of growing demand amid very limited supply.

"With no traditional office buildings completed in the past two years, tight supply, coupled with strong demand, continue to push rents and vacancy rates in pre-Asian financial crisis levels," the firm says.

So much so that first class buildings like The Enterprise Center along Ayala Ave. have reportedly cut down their "Low cost" offers to new businesses to only two months' worth from as high as nine months only a year ago.

Limited supply

Boosted by overinvestment in the 1990s, local property developers have resumed gun-ho churning to enhance local supply and wait for lower land values before breaking ground on new office buildings.

At present, there are 8.8 million square feet of office space available in Makati and 3.6 million square feet in the Ortigas area. Given the rate that call centers are cropping up, supply is running fairly tight.

Six new office buildings were launched in the last two years, and some are being planned for at least three more years, according to Colliers International Philippines research head Richard Raymundo.

He said most landowners are still quoting high prices as if the 1997 crisis has never happened at all.

"It's still are realistic," he says. "How can you develop the property if you don't have the land?"

On the other hand, other developers are also hesitant about putting up new buildings because rent and office values have not appreciated beyond their threshold yet.

"Construction costs are definitely higher than 1996 levels, so you'd have to be certain rent price level for you to be able to say 'Hey, I'll go ahead with the project'," he adds.

For developers to start thinking about putting up new buildings, rental prices should appreciate to P650-P700 a square meter a month—a level which will likely be hit in the next six months.

So what's holding the market back?

This early cracks are already starting to emerge in the property sector's current recovery apart from what looks like a slowly inflating property market bubble, analysts at Colliers feel that the currently "slow burn" political crisis is gradually taking its toll on the local business scene.

Political crisis

"If you look at the barometer One price appreciated 1, it's steep, but we might see some correction," the report says. "A steady sowing signs that it might slow down in the next six months because of all this political instability."

He explains that office space for call centers and BPOs are major investments that are made in the context of broad politico-economic environment and not only on the basis of cheap labor.

"At the end of the day, it's investor confidence that matters," he says. "If you're looking at a 5,000-square meter office space, that's a lot of money. If you are that something's unstable, you need another point of reference."

In its turn, other segments of the property market are also making good business especially residential developments, which are being targeted at overseas Filipino workers and other expatriate Filipinos with large disposable incomes.

"The only sector that's being left out is the market for gulf shares which hasn't recovered since the Asian crisis," Raymundo says. "All the other sectors are moving fairly places."

Already, Colliers believes that the demand for residential property developments will plateau in the near run to three years.

While Jones Lang LaSalle predicted over the summer that sales of mid-to-some residential developments will "remain buoyant" due to "competitive pricing coupled with low interest rates," this situation may soon change due to developments on the political front.

Indeed, the crisis is already threatening the normally resilient residential sector, as short- and long-term interest rates rise to help the government borrow funds and lend confidence actions against the local currency.

No market crash

Nonetheless, a 1997-style market crash is unlikely given the continued build of supply on almost all segments.

"There is no over investment, so there is no bubble to burst," Dan-applal Inc. research head Enrico Claudio says in an interview. He says he is bullish on the property market, especially since its upward cycle has just started.

The main threat for now over the horizon is if high crude oil prices force the world economy to go into a recession, which will, in turn, affect the countries that feed the local call-center boom.

For now, however, research can rest easy that she will continue to afford new cellular phones, new clothes, and expensive meals courtesy of her call-center job.

Already, however, she's beginning to see signs of a glut in the industry and wants to explore new career paths.

"When I look around, I see there are so many of us," she says. "I want to learn to do something else soon."

The call center-dependent property market may want to take its cue from her.

"As a veterinarian, I know how important it is to maintain a healthy environment for breeding pigs for commercial purposes, not only to ensure profitability but also the safety of consumers.

In my 20 years of running a livestock enterprise, I have realized the importance of sustainable development to ensure long term viability by bringing down the cost of operations and, more importantly, lowering the cost of end products for consumers.

This means searching for modernization of operations, and this is where the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) comes in. DBP offers various loan facilities that encourage sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

DBP helped my piggery grow over the years by providing loans for expansion. Last year, DBP guaranteed my company, Red Dragon Farms, a loan to modernize its operations and make it more profitable while at the same time helping our piggery become more environment-friendly.

Funded under DBP's Environmental Infrastructure Support Credit Program II and Industrial Pollution Control Loan Program II, the loans financed the construction of piggery buildings using modern and cost-effective technology, and a waste management system. The use of the effective waste management and evaporative cooling systems, there is a substantial amount of water saved in the farm. We have also provided a healthy environment for pigs as well as to the surrounding community.

At present, Red Dragon Farms is negotiating with Philflex – a Davao-based company – for the establishment of a biogas system that will use waste products in the piggery farm to produce methane for its power needs.

I am sure DBP will be happy to help finance this project which is in consistence with its loan programs that promote sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

DBP understands that helping Red Dragon Farms improve its production efficiency will also benefit the community, the environment and most especially, the environment."

Dr. Ruben Mel Lo, DVM, AB
Owner
Red Dragon Farms

Unlad ng bawat't isa. Unlad ng Pilipinas.

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

Idalik natin

Aussies may help RP use mapping technology

To confirm mining data before investing

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE AUSTRALIANS are considering helping the Philippines use a satellite mapping technology in its effort to confirm data on mineral resources that would help investments flow in.

Trade Secretary Peter D. Favila said in a briefing yesterday that Australian mining companies had been requesting confirmation of Philippine data that big a mining roadshow in Melbourne earlier this month.

The roadshow was the latest leg in the local mining industry's global outing to revitalize the development of local mines.

During the roadshow, Favila joined government representatives—including Delia Albert, Presidential Adviser on Mineral Development—and officials of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

Government data show that the country's mineral deposits are spread across the country, with explored and identified metallic and non-metallic reserves estimated at $902 billion or P54 trillion.

Of the 9 million hectares of mineral-land land, only 430,000 hectares are covered by mining permits and about 4.6 million hectares of land rich in mineral deposits are waiting to be explored.

Industry experts said it would need $6 billion to $8 billion in investments to develop the country's mineral resources.

"It's not that the Australian firms are (doubtful) of our data, it is just that they have the most advanced mining technology and they want to use that technology to optimize returns on the investments they might commit," Favila said.

The trade chief said the use of satellite mapping technology in the country could be made through a grant from the Australian government.

Also, Favila said Australian companies had apprised him of their concern over the integrity of land titling and the security of tenure in the mining sites.

"They are also concerned about the integrity of agreements as well as the problem of resistance directed against the projects of those in the (list) are already investing here," he said.

Last month, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez said a total of $208.7 million worth of investments had financed in through the 23 projects that the local industry had presented to various international roadshows.

Romualdez said the amount represented projects that have either started operations or were in the development and construction phases of work.

PROMOTIONAL icons like this—found in busy commercial areas of China's key cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou—have helped the Department of Tourism in marketing the Philippines as a prime tourist destination to the growing number of Chinese travelers.

Jollibee Q2 profit jumps 26.8%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DESPITE rising inflation that changed the consumers' spending habits, the fast-food chain continued to enjoy brisk sales.

AN EFFECTIVE cost management has boosted the net profit of fast food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. by 26.8 percent in the second quarter of the year to P536.2 million despite rising inflation that adversely affected consumer spending.

Profit in the first semester reached P984.6 million, up 11.3 percent from year-ago level, the company said in a disclosure.

"Recovering profit margin from rising inflation will help fuel our long-term growth. Margin recovery during the quarter was achieved by a combination of cost improvement and gradual price adjustments on core products," Jollibee chief executive officer Tony Tan Caktiong said.

Jollibee's system wide sales climbed 13.8 percent to P30.2 billion in the second quarter from the level in the same period last year.

System-wide sales for the Jollibee brand grew 8.3 percent in the second quarter, while the sales of restaurant fast food chains Chowking were up 14.6 percent. Greenwich sales were likewise higher by 0.7 percent. Bread and pastries store Delifrance posted a 10.6-percent jump in sales in the second quarter. In the foreign market, sales of Yonghe King in China grew 16.6 percent.

In the first half, system-wide sales jumped 13.1 percent to P59.1 billion.

SMIC income grows by 22%

SM INVESTMENTS Corp., the flagship company of mall tycoon Henry Sy Jr., said its net income for April to June, the first quarter of its current fiscal year, grew by 22 percent to P1.24 billion from P1.01 billion in the same period last year.

Total revenue rose 18 percent to P11.42 billion during the quarter ending June 30 from last year's P10.05 billion. SMIC's retail business, through its 29 SM department stores, accounted for 73 percent of total revenue.

From April to June this year, retail sales reached P7.68 billion, 6.5 percent higher than the P7.2 billion in the same quarter last year.

"The growth in sales was due mainly to the opening of two new department stores in Dasmariñas, Cavite and Batangas in 2004, and the launching of the newly-renovated SM Makati and SM Delgado in Iloilo. The SM Advantage Card program, which offers rewards and discounts to cardholders, also encouraged customer loyalty.

Rental revenues from malls increased 11 percent to P2 billion during the three-month period from P1.8 billion in the same period last year.

Equity in net earnings of associates, namely Banco de Oro and China Bank, grew 114 percent to P503 million from year-ago level brought about mainly by a 42-percent jump in BDO's first quarter 2005 net income. SMIC holds a 46.6-percent interest in BDO and a 25-percent interest in China Bank.

SMIC's total cost and expenses increased by 9 percent to P8.7 billion from April to June this year from nearly P8 billion in the same months in 2004. —Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Nenaco seen to net ₱150M

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER years of losses, Negros Navigation Co., the shipping unit of Metro Pacific Corp., is expected to post a net income of P150 million this year.

Nenaco president Sulficio Tagud Jr. said the book of the projected earnings would come from the sale of assets.

The shipping company is expected to start posting profits only by 2007, based on its 10-year rehabilitation plan approved by the court last year. During the rehabilitation period, Nenaco will earn more P5.9 billion in sales.

Nenaco's losses have been pulling down Metro Pacific's finances. A recovery of the shipping company this year would allow its parent company to also post a better number.

"We started to make money in the first half. We expect to be in the black this year with a net income of P150 million, including non-recurring gains from the sale of assets," said Tagud in an interview.

In the first half, Nenaco posted a 15-percent growth in passenger and cargo volumes. The second half, however, may be weaker as business during this period is usually down for the shipping industry, according to Metro Pacific president Jose Nilo G. Ua.

Tagud said Nenaco would sell three of its older vessels in the second half as part of the company's rebuilding program.

Robinsons posts ₱1.2B in gross earnings

ROBINSONS Land Corp. said its gross revenue from April to June, the third quarter of its fiscal year 2005, hit P1.24 billion.

This brought its year-to-date revenue to P3.66 billion, up from last year's P3.49 billion.

The company said its performance was boosted by higher rental income from shopping malls, higher sales from housing and building divisions, and the improved profitability of its hotels.

The commercial center division, which operates ROC's 16 malls all over the country, contributed 68 percent of the gross revenue.

The company's flagship malls, Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Manila, continued to enjoy excellent rental income, while new malls Robinsons Place Pioneer, Robinsons Place Calamba, and Robinsons Place Lipa, and Robinsons Place Dasmariñas also contributed significantly to the rental growth.

ROC's high rise buildings division registered a 19-percent growth in revenues on the strength of brisk sales from its six residential condominium projects around Metro Manila.

With DBP encouragement and financing, more and more people are benefiting from giving back to the environment in terms of sustenance and livelihood.

For more information on DBP environmental loan facilities, please call 891-9444 and 891-2888.

Alaska profit down 26% due to rising costs

PUBLICLY LISTED Alaska Milk Corp. said its net income in the first six months of the year dropped 26 percent to P100 million from last year's P135 million, due to higher expenses.

Higher selling prices of all milk products and the strong volume performance of the ready-to-drink milk business helped lift revenue during the first half of the year to P2.4 billion from P2.34 billion in the same period last year.

Selling prices of selected Alaska products were increased by an average of 7 percent effective Feb. 1 to mitigate the rise in raw material costs.

For the six-month period, cost of sales and operating expenses rose 8 percent to P2.2 billion from last year's P2.08 billion due to higher prices of major raw materials such as skimmed milk powder, coconut oil, refined sugar, and of packaging products such as fliptops.

In the second quarter, net income rose 9 percent to P67 million from P62 million in the same period last year.

Alaska's revenue in the second quarter grew 22 percent to P1.2 billion from P1.01 billion in the same period last year.

Higher selling prices of milk products and strong volume growth of the processed milk and ultra high temperature (UHT) ready-to-drink milk businesses pushed second quarter revenue higher year-on-year.

Cost of sales and operating expenses in the second quarter increased by 21 percent to P1.15 billion from P954 million a year ago.

Consumer demand for milk products—evaporated, sweetened condensed and powdered milk—remained soft during the second quarter as inflationary pressure, brought about by higher crude oil prices, tempered consumer spending for both food and non-food items. —Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GOING loco over coco /C3

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Bacal-Farinas

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 3DU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

My off-and-on affair with the gym

By Chit Rocio
Contributor

After 10 years, I'm back in a gym, inspired by visions of dancing at my grandchildren's weddings

NOTHING feels as right as strolling in a gym. I have done it often enough in this lifetime.

After all, every time I feel a pain, it is usually traced to lack of exercise, though lately, age has added to the problem.

Of course, it's better to actually attend exercises, but travelling already makes me feel tired.

When I was younger, the reason for going to the gym was to get back in shape, lose weight, or firm up. Now it's more functional.

I have two literary mentorships—of Antonio Enrico and filmmaker Mario Cha—dropped the latter since nearly every manuscript seems to be peddling something. When I'm revising I tend to be left alone.

Sweating and any activity that leads to it do not appeal to me. That rules out any kind of sport as it's the gym for me.

Inspired

After 10 years, the longest time I was away, I'm back, inspired by visions of dancing at my grandchildren's weddings (the children, that is, the youngest, 6). The scene is greatly changed.

I arrive in the afternoon, carrying the backpack with the gym's logo like a huge handbag. I refuse to drag it via my back and look like a hiker.

I probably look like a lumpy sausage stuffed into a tweed-striped red-and-orange body hugger and lavender tights, the latter Fredo look of the Rudolfo Yeo. So one may be able to place me in time, but I definitely feel and probably look alien.

The others are wearing loose outfits of dark blue or gray, something out of the Chinese of the '50s, nothing form-fitting, so my conspicuous look like they are from an even earlier era.

Like me to wear a similar attire the next day but promptly realize I can count as I please since no one cannot recognize me one another.

Just as well. Without makeup and girdle, but not as you huff and puff and moan, you would rather be incognito, even to yourself, crouching not easy to manage when you're facing a wall of mirrors. The most appealing diversion is a television screen showing in a row of screens in front of you and bound to your earphones.

Secure

I have a personal trainer for the first time since to teach me how to work the equipment, the proper postures and breathing techniques. You feel secure having a trainer, however to make sure you're doing everything right all the time.

It does take months to get nearly even to some as I can, and courage to finish two weeks. The worst, I am pleased to discover, makes sweat in lots of a drudgery. But it can also make you forget this time, which defeats the very purpose of exercises, I suppose.

At the end of the second week, I have a dead wound from lifting through two sessions. A personal trainer, I am told, would have eased me from the tragedy, but I think it's the dress. I remember attempting it in shorts, too, using my sister's, a size smaller, and possibly good only for two weeks.

The wound does not create until after six months. As soon as it does, I grant unto a proper bike shoe (at P3,000 a pair, the most expensive I have owned) and I'm back in the gym. I also decide to get a personal trainer.

The investment is only beginning to pay off—my size, for instance, shrinking from two large to decent large— when I have to take a scheduled trip to the States, which means another two months away from the gym. The break is extended by two more months because of the Christmas season.

Goodbyes

I contact my trainer again but I am unable to keep her for long. She receives her long-awaited assignment: not her Orlando nephew of my promise. She thanks me and says goodbye. I say goodbye to the gym again.

After a while I return, determined to be re-inspired. I wonder once more if forever-lovers in fashion, following the wonderful breeze of music. An under-wall is covered with mirrors, a group of about 30 young men and women in four rows is dancing to a low-latin number led by a slightly chunkier girl instructor in a cheap yellow shirt and an even tighter pair of pants, yelling instructions, counting the beat and admiring the view image in the mirrors. This seems perfect for both my sense and long-term plans.

I quickly sign up for a 6-month value long before I realize I'm out of my league—the pace, the fit-and-sexy image, the combination. My body dances to the tune of another drummer, who plays only for the person the instructor calls fat.

The gym can be a strange and intimidating place for a non-athletic senior like me, but I know—indeed feel—I have to be there. I realize, though, I need to do it more if I really want to dance at my grandchildren's weddings.

How Mars and Venus get fit

Ami Ito

Studies show it is easier for men to lose fat in the abdominal area while women have a harder time losing fat in the lower body

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Amir

D. MARLA Hoke was not the only scientist at the 2005 Idea World Fitness Convention to talk about the differences in how men and women get fit. But of any favorite investigators, Dr. Ian Rivers also discussed the subject in his presentation, "The Female Fitness Training Advantage."

The body has about 30 trillion cells, but only the reproductive cells are different in men and women. The rest of us, Rivers like the latest research, is almost the size of the body and not gender. Except sex, as a laboratory, you cannot distinguish if an organ belongs to a man or a woman.

The hormones of the reproductive system account for differences between sexes like height and weight.

The average woman generally has eight to 10 percent more fat than a man. Some of the percent of a woman's body fat is not especially damaging. It is essential to the demands of pregnancy and breastfeeding and is found primarily in the thighs, buttocks and breasts.

The body fat percentage of elite male and female athletes can vary by only two percent.

Distribution

Reproductive hormones also seem to control how fat is distributed. In men, fat is typically stored in the abdomen and upper body while a typical woman stores fat in the lower abdomen, hips, buttocks and thighs.

But everyone follows this stereotypical fat distribution pattern. Some women store fat in the waist and abdomen and some men have heavier lower bodies. Even again hormones seem to be responsible.

Evidence suggests women who store fat like a man have more androgens (male sex hormones) than the average female. Women with much smaller waist-to-hip ratios (the ratio of waist to hips) have high levels of estrogen.

Studies show it is easier for men to lose fat in the abdominal area while women have a harder time losing fat in the lower body, including the lower abdomen. Fat cells have two types of receptors, alpha and beta. Alpha receptors inhibit lipolysis or the breakdown of fat. Women have more alpha receptors in the hip and thigh regions. Beta receptors stimulate fat breakdown. Men have more beta receptors in the abdominal region.

Lipoprotein lipase (LPL) is an enzyme involved in fat storage. Women have 2.5 times more LPL in the lower body compared to the upper body.

Hormone sensitive lipase (HSL) is an enzyme involved in fat breakdown. In females, HSL is very slow in releasing fat from the hips and thighs.

Face first

This may explain why women tend to lose fat first in the face and chest, then in the abdomen, and finally in the hips and thighs. Some experts say a woman's thighs will usually slim down when their body fat percentage goes down to about 16 percent.

The good news is that women have more fat than men during loss to modify—an extremely useful evolutive. This gives women an advantage in endurance sports like long distance cycling and running.

Females also have an advantage in swimming because their higher body fat aids in buoyancy. So women have less drag and expend 20 percent less energy compared to men at the same pace and distance.

Men have 10-to-12 times more testosterone than women. Testosterone is the most potent anabolic hormone, dictated by men's muscle building." This explains why men have bigger muscles than women. Muscles make up some 20 percent of a man's total weight and 10 percent of a woman's.

Testosterone helps men build big muscles through weight training. Most women cannot build muscles and also have to work much harder to look "cut and defined" because they have more subcutaneous fat that covers up their muscles. Women who easily become "muscular" most likely have higher androgen levels than the average female.

Women, in general, are three to four inches shorter and 25-30 pounds lighter. Therefore, they are shorter because they stop growing two to three years before men.

Growth period

Estrogen hastens the closing of growth plates on long bones (arms and legs), thus relatively less endocrine growth period. Girls usually stop growing by 18 years while boys grow till they are 21.

So men are usually taller and have wider shoulders, more muscle mass and less fat. Women are usually shorter and have wider hips and more subcutaneous fat.

Men also have more muscular and denser bones than women. They have larger joints. But not men but genes mean no longer have room to support wider hips. Unfortunately, wide hips also make female knees more predisposed to problems in running, jumping and hopping.

For women with wider hips, Rivers says equate should be shoulder width or wider. Stationary or step-back lunges are best stressful than step-forward lunges. Cardio activities should be low-impact.

Women tend to have a greater variance in the tendon or bones back area, making them more prone to chronic lower back pain. So "core" exercises that teach how to stabilize the torso when arms and legs are in motion are a must in a woman's exercise program, according to Rivers.

Hint well. Exercise and appetite, how time says according to genes?

Visit www.mypyramid.gov.ph

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Criss-cross crunch on mini ball

This exercise firms and strengthens the abdominal muscles, particularly the oblique muscles that criss-cross the waist.

Equipment
Mini ball (see text and small pillow (all)
Where to exercise
1. Place the mini ball behind your lower back.

2. Legs should be hip-distance apart. Place both hands behind your head. This is your starting position.

3. Diagonally curl your torso and exhale (to only lift the opposite knee.

4. Slowly return to the starting position and do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips
1. Exhale as you curl. Inhale on the return.

2. Support your head lightly with your fingertips (to avoid pulling on your neck).

3. Mobilize your hips so that you do not allow your hips to lift up as you curl down. (Only flexes from the waist.

Repetitions
3 repetitions per side

YEAH! We love golf: PNB's Dongmercia Jacinto, Nestor Pineda and Narciso Cupino, with HSBC's Jing Warren and PNB's Mike Sandig

JOVEN Reyes of RCBC Bankard with MasterCard's Judith Dayrit and Anton Corro

COOL bank executives: HSBC'S Peter Cruz, Equitable Card Network's Pol Rana and Harry Gan

Bankers hit the greens

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS. MasterCard VP and country manager, Perk Villa-Real, with winners Peter Yap of Allied Bank, Louie Garcia of RCBC Bankard, Narciso Cupino of PNB and Tony Robles of Chinabank

HUNDRED senior bank executives took a break from the asphalt jungle and drilled out by spending a whole morning in the sprawling greens of the world-class Sta. Elena Golf Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The lucky ones won tons of prizes during the 2005 maiden MasterCard Invitational Golf Tournament, playing-pro.

One notable: make the pack from MasterCard underscoring the two distinguished guests, like is ex-pro's golfer himself Jose Neto Villarreal, vice president and country manager, woman of substance Judith Dayrit, vice president for member relations and marketing; southern boy Antonio Gorne, director for operations and member relations; and Rosabelle Arabit, member relations representative.

Once the "holler" and "how are you" were over, it was time to hit the ball, palangpo.

Rafael Marques II of Security Bank, Eddie Gaba of Bank of Philippine Islands, Rany Cruz of RCBC Bankard, and Julian Villanueva of Metrobank participated in the ceremonial tee-off.

The competition was hot, each person shooting off his best form and shot (no important marks or Oswald points) starting.

And the winners are: Class C champ, Peter Yap of Allied Bank; Class B, Narciso Cupino of Philippine National Bank; and Class A, Tony Robles of Chinatrust. The runner-of-the-hour was Louie Garcia of RCBC Bankard, who bragged of the coveted MasterCard championship.

All these sour champs received a trophy and a Mont Blanc, courtesy of MasterCard, natch!

Special awardees were Jonathan Ang of metrobank, for the longest drive at hole 11, and fantastic golfer Mary Cruz of RCBC Bankard, for "the Most Awesome Drive" and the "Ladies Special Recognition" award, palangpo.

Hey did you know that the MasterCard award-winning television advertising campaign is now seen in 36 countries giving the Pinoy-Pinay global model? Grab a MasterCard quick, palangpo.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Rhea Mae Hagera using Nokia CameraPhone

The real action began when at the end of the morning, tons of prizes were raffled off. Loads of cool golfers did not go home empty-handed, palangpo.

Samsung round-up

It's been like a blistering month. Samsung had an event almost every week, palangpo.

Just made sure to be present when Samsung unveiled its biggest range of enhanced Silver Stars: Health Systems home appliances, palangpo, at the gorgeous Harbor Garden Tent at the Luxury Manila Philippine Plaza.

Seventy cool, eye-catching, new models in four product categories were launched from must-have washing machines, air-conditioners and refrigerators, to Samsung's newest baby, the first Silver Star-equipped vacuum cleaners.

So what's Stars all about? I asked. "Stars-technology effortlessly removes bacteria, viruses and foreign pre-owners and kills them cells, suppresses their ability to breed and, therefore effectively inhibits the cell from growing," explained super talented Samsung corporate marketing head, Angeline Gotladera.

In his welcome address, the popular Hyuck Jae Shim, president and CEO of Samsung Philippines, said, "Samsung's vibra Nano Health System will speed up our goal to become the top premium brand in the digital appliances business."

Hey check this out people. In a three-year R&D program costing an awesome over US$10 million, the sterilization and anti-bacteria properties of the new home appliances were tested and certified by laboratories in Korea and Japan to be among the best in the market today, palangpo.

This is a welcome development for sure so who dreads of a healthier lifestyle, wise-ass pun (as in, all hahs?!)

Reception

Loads of action had been happening at the popular Dusit Hotel Nikko, palangpo, which hosted a fun, relaxed cocktail reception in honor of the royal Thai birthday. The occasion was meant to further strengthen the ties of the hotel with the chi-chi diplomatic community.

Heading the pack was none other than Her Excellency Aalia Bantugan, the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Dusit's popular and charmant general manager, Rene Red, together with the hotel's dynamic multi-talented executive team, welcomed the ambassador and members of the embassy's staff to the celebration of their strong bond of partnership and friendship.

The exquisite Asian and San Francisco menu was where the sensational place. Showing from the hotel Nikko's special brand of gracious hospitality, an endless bottle of excellently prepared cocktail bites, superbly prepared by the expert chefs of the hotel's renowned Asia specialty eatery the Thai's Restaurant, the Japanese Benkay and Pierre San Miguel. The scrumptious array of yummies included mini Turkey Tortilla Rolls with guacamole, boatsmo of smoked Salmon on Rye Bread and Pad Thai Gung, Thai Siam Gung, moist mini chocolate squares, and many more, palangpo.

Remember, the affair ended with a karaoke session where everyone tried to be an "Ammiano Idol" contestant, dahlings.

SAMSUNG's bright minds: Jerry Cuaco, Dongchi Jang, Maribel Monreal, Wook Jae Shim, Yun Tae Kim and Jason Ta Kim

DUSIT'S Hoshi Azuma and Rina Odchigue, Thailembassy's counselor for commercial affairs, Pussachi Maskasit and Dusit's Meriana Mandela

CORY Quirino, with Samsung Digital Video Systems product manager Enrique de Leon, director and the Ode Silver Watch.

BEAUTY queens at Samsung affair: Carla Gay Balingit, Karla Bautista, Ella Evangelista and Tammy Tajarta

SAMSUNG's Antonio Mauricio and Pamor Arvis Maria and Nancy Tan

SAMSUNG's Angeline Limbaco with Dusit Communications' Pen Apapa

BHUN Hla Yinglayan, Dusit's Benjarong Restaurant manager-Maritcha M., with her husband, Pussachi Maskasit, and Bhungkorn Lawanarat

BHUN Pen Wongsrai, restaurant group captain Pornchai Lawanarat, Thai embassy's defense and air attaché, Dusit's general manager, Boonlert and Thai Ambassador Aalia Bantugan

Nuts about coconut

INSIDE OUT

Gay Quirino

PROBABLY no tree on earth can rival the coconut in terms of usefulness.

The coconut has over 65 practical uses—for handicrafts, food, medicine, shoes, personal care, fuel. Producing cure (food), energy (fuel), and beauty (personal care). Rather known is not expect from the meat, coming down to husk to crushed sold version and charcoal from its shell.

Now sweeping the Philippines, and hopefully the world, is virgin coconut oil.

Perfect for health, beauty

In her latest book, "Dr. Coconut—The Perfect Health Diet", Dr. Bruce Fife, a naturopathic physician who is a passionate about the coconut.

Weight loss. Regular intake of coconut oil may help you lose weight. Coconut oil is a unique oil. It's a medium chain fatty acid. There are three kinds of fatty acids (also food—short-, medium- and long-chained). It provides less calories than any other oil. And they are used up as energy and not stored as fat. Consuming the oil gives one a feeling of fullness.

Heart friendly. Coconut is a saturated oil from a plant and is cholesterol-free. People who use coconut regularly reportedly have healthy hearts. The Framingham Heart Study of the United States records that death from heart disease is 10 times a country with a high consumption of coconut oil, who only one in 1978.

In the Rizal region, a coconut-consuming area, cholesterol levels were high among its population. Though still within acceptable norms. What was significant, however, was that, among all Filipinos, Bicolanos had the lowest number of deaths from stroke and heart disease (study in 1984 by Dr. Rachel Florentino and Dr. Apostol).

Helps in cancer prevention. In 1971, a review done by by Lauro Lim of cancer research studies over 40 years showed that "coconut oil is cancer-immune." Dr. Lim's study was published in the medical journal Cancer.

Coconut oil is naturally safe as the medium-chains fatty acids it contains have been shown to prevent cancer. The oil arrests harmful cell membranes that keep the cell healthy.

Fights infection. Ayurveda, a 5,000-year-old medical medicine from Indian uses coconut oil (applied to antiseptic, antifungal, purgative, germ strengthener, balm for sin aches/stomach aches, syphilis, gonorrhea, smallpox, leprosy, intestinal parasites, and other ailments, etc.

Just 3 tablets, a chemist with a Ph.D in pharmacology has made extensive studies on fats and oils. He discovered the antiseptic action of the coconut. Lipidic solid gels, improved by Dr. Enig, stopped the growth of harmful, making it resistant antibiotic.

Dr. Conrado Separ, emeritus professor in pharmacology in-patient unit, St. Luke's Medical Center—Hospital, cited Dr. Enig's pioneering Lauric index, 95 percent pure monolaurin from coconut lauric acid, as potent with AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus. Majority registered significant reduction in viral counts.

Treats acne. Studies indicate monolaurin gel may be a safe and effective skin treatment for acne because of its anti-bacterial effect.

Perfect moisturizer. Coconut oil may also be a very effective moisturizer and hair and scalp treatment. Its fatty acids are easily healthy and can be used as moisturizer, cleanser and protect the skin.

Anti-aging. Coconut water has plant hormones considered biologically active such as kinetin that may have anti-aging properties. More research may further uncover the coconut's various properties.

Your to-do list

- Just eaten, drought your bottle of virgin coconut ACCO.
- Drink two to four tablespoons daily instead oils or salts, and food drinks as health boosters.
- Apply the oil as a moisturizer and/or makeup remover.
- Snack on fresh coconut. Drink its water for better health.

KKK crusade

Learn more about the coconut. The Philippine Coconut Authority (tel. 9277009 and 9204501) marks Coco Week, Sept. 25-28, at Bloguerals Mall, 3311 Maginhawa. Open to the public, it aims to extend among Filipinos respect for the coconut.

Its theme, "Niyog Kapamayan, Kabuhayan, Kagandahan," aims to make the coconut an indispensable part of our lives once again.

To me, it already is. Simplistic as it may sound, we are able to use every part of the coconut. Its price could go up to P50 each. The Philippines being the second largest coconut producer in the world (next to Indonesia) produces 15 billion coconuts, that means about P750 billion for the country.

Join me in this movement to promote the uses of the:

[uses and light]

Email [illegible]

Raul's brush with the paranormal

INNER AWAKENING

Arlene T. Lecaros

When he wanted chilis in his yard, they started growing without anybody planting them

ON THE MORNING of Friday, Aug. 5, I received a message that my school friend Raul S. Roco had died.

Although I did not come to a surprise. I still didn't believe it until I turned on my television set and confirmed the sad news. I was not surprised because a fatty liver disease and diabetes with prostate cancer a few ago.

Unknown to many, Raul and I were quite close during our college years in the '60s in San Beda. We spent sleepless nights working on the official school publication, The Bedan, at the Intercoast Printing Co. on Quezon Boulevard, together with Benito Pagsising, Bienvenido Noriel, Antonio Alfonso Aguilar, Abdo Mikhaeel Jr. and Pablo Taliman III.

To keep us awake, we would tell jokes. Jeremy Aguilar was the champion in toilet and sick jokes and then would shout down anything that's loud. Benny Ho was in middle than 1.1.c. hards and sharp, especially in speech and manner), so he is today.

Never vulgar

Raul's jokes were never vulgar and never on the expense of another person. I remember one of his favorites:

"A man enters a bar and orders a beer. The bartender notices the man has a carrot tucked on one ear. The man drinks the beer and after paying, leaves the bar.

"The next day, the same man again enters the bar, orders a beer, pays and leaves. The bartender notices that again he has a carrot on one ear. He is dying of curiosity but is too shy or reluctant to ask.

"The bartender realizes that the next time the man comes around, he will definitely ask him [about the] carrot.

"The next day, the man comes again, but this time he has a banana on his ear. The bartender, unable to contain his curiosity, finally asks, 'Sir, come out, sir, but why do you have a banana on your ear?'

"The man looks at the bartender and replies, 'Because I don't find no carrot!'"

Pennies have already been heaped on Raul and his accomplishment and I cannot add anything more.

But let me relate one or two little known personal stories about him. In the early '80s, a prominent and wealthy businessman falsely accused me of infringing on a copyrighted documentary film material he claimed he owned. He filed a lawsuit against me.

I asked Raul Roco, who was then with the ACCRA Law Office, to defend me. The businessman sent Raul and tried to persuade him not to take the case. Raul replied, "I cannot refuse the case because Jimmy is an old friend since college days."

High-powered defense

The lawyers who defended me included Raul, Freddie Del Rosario and Antero Cruz. We filed a countersuit against the businessman who, when he saw my defense panel, knew he never. Soft and countersuit were simultaneously withdrawn. The businessman and I became friends afterwards.

Raul also had some brush with the paranormal and the strange. Let me relate the story used in my book, "Beyond Ordinary Reality" (Vol. 2), for which he wrote the foreword:

I was in the house of Sen. Raul S. Roco in La Vista, QC, one evening. While dressing up for a trip, he pointed to some plants in our corner and said, "Jimmy, you may not believe this, but these plants were not supposed to be here. Nobody planted them and they can be found in Bicol. No one knows how they got here."

Raul is from Naga City. He told me he always had to have a big clump of native herbs brought here Bicol to his home in Quezon City but never got around to doing it. One time, he did manage to have one plant brought from Bicol. Shortly afterwards he saw young shrubs growing all over the place without anyone planting them.

He also told me that, one time, he scanned some chili plants in his yard. Soon afterwards, he saw them growing without anybody planting them.

Bird from Bicol

A rational explanation for this seemingly strange occurrence might be that a bird carried the seeds from Bicol to Quezon City. But who did the bird drop the seeds on Raul's yard and not somewhere else?

Later when Raul visited an optical, I said he owned is not plants, he mentioned there were no seeds there. He asked the gardener to plant some but they did not survive. He could intend to have the seeds there. The next time he visited, there were so many seedlings were growing. The gardener said they just suddenly sprouted.

When I went to Raul's wake, I couldn't prevent his coffin. I could feel his presence. When I approached Senator to greet her, I strangely felt him standing to her right. I had to rub my eyes of the shock for some time, or I would have gone into seizure.

I thought Raul was still outside. I was wrong. He only wanted to greet me and express his gratitude for being at his wake. He wanted to tell himself to a fellow Bedan and Intercoast that he usually sees only during special occasions after college.

I was just laughed Raul making the spirit to know we laughed at his jokes?

Address letters to this column to 40 Sgt. Esguerra St., Sgt. Esguerra Village, Makati City. Call 8367345 or 8920858 for info matters or comments. E-mail jimmy@pdfinet.com or jimmy@pdfinet.com. Or visit our http://www.pdfinet.com/jimmy. Listen to my DZRH radio program 7:30-8:30 p.m. every Sunday.

CHILDREN from various areas in Rizal and Pampanga are vaccinated against three common childhood diseases through the Bigtas Pandayan, an immunization program by the Philippine Pediatric Society and New Zealand Milk Philippines.

Free vaccination for Metro kids

THE PHILIPPINE Pediatric Society (PPS), in collaboration with New Zealand Milk Philippines, launched a program to immunize children against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

Through Oplan Pandayan, over MMR vaccination event of school children aged 1-10 years old in Metro Manila.

The program was launched at Barangay Commonwealth Center in Malabon with volunteer doctors from the Manila Central University's Department of Pediatrics vaccinating 120 children.

Oplan Pandayan vaccination events also given at the Philippine Pediatric Society Building in Bago Bantay, Quezon City; Asilo de San Vicente de Paul, United Nations Avenue, Manila; and Barrio Ugong Health Center, Pasig City.

The program aimed to help improve the health of children, not only through immunization, but also through the education of parents on proper nutrition to protect young children from common childhood diseases, pointers on proper nutrition and diet, including the importance of giving children fortified milk to help protect them from common childhood diseases, more given.

Oplan Pandayan was organized by the PPS as part of a continuing medical grant from New Zealand Milk Philippines.

Pill makes skin clearer

THE ORAL contraceptive pill may provide the solution to the problems of acne that does not respond to other treatments.

Acne, an inflammatory problem of the skin, does not only affect adolescents but older women, too. A study published in the Journal Academy of Dermatology found that 54 percent of women aged 20-34 suffered from some form of acne. The prevalence of the problem did not decrease substantially until after age 44.

Management for acne usually involves cleansers and astringents or prescription medications like antibiotics and retinoids. But for people who do not respond to or tolerate these treatments, hormonal therapy may be the alternative. Combined therapy for acne includes oral contraceptives.

Acne is basically a manifestation of increased levels of androgens, a male hormone in males but present in small amounts in women. A combination pill containing both estrogen (ethinylestradiol) and progestogen (desogestrel) has been proven to be effective in treating some cases of mild to moderate acne.

A study by Sartorius, et al., showed that the unique combination pill reduced the number and severity of acne lesions over six cycles. The pill provides two different doses of hormones in each cycle, which closely resembles a woman's normal menstrual cycle.

Obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Sylvia Santos said, with the combination pill, women get another non-contraceptive benefit. They can avoid an unplanned pregnancy and also have clear skin.

Call 8270018, or e-mail [illegible]@yahoo.ph